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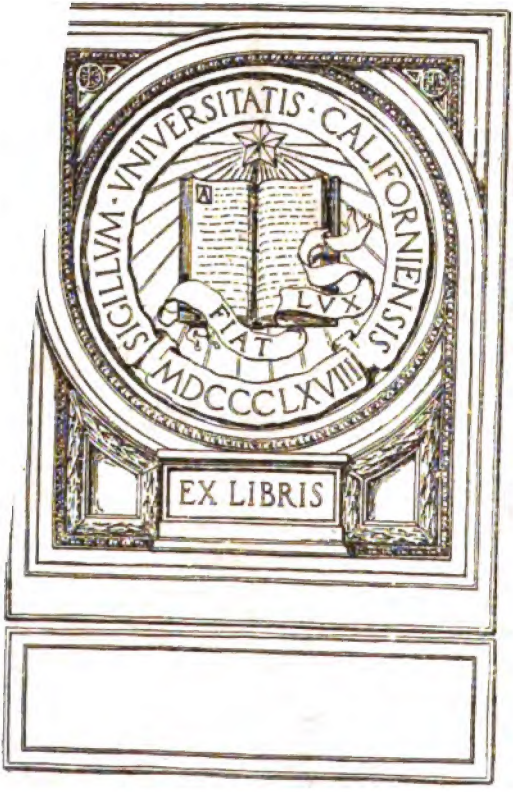
RUSSIA

TRAVELS AND STUDIES

ANNETTE M. B. MEAKIN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A prophetic ikon in the cupola of the Cathedral of St. Sophia, Novgorod.

RUSSIA

TRAVELS AND STUDIES

BY

Annette M. B. Meakin

Fellow of the Anthropological Institute.

AUTHOR OF

"A Ribbon of Iron," and "In Russian Turkestan"

ILLUSTRATED

"Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
Beyond Danubius, to the Tauric Pool."

Milton

"La Russie est assez vaste pour que plusieurs
écrivains trouvent à y faire leur moisson."

Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

ST. PETERSBURG.

Rousseau's advice—Russian stoves—German traveller's opinion—Warmth of houses and public buildings—St. Petersburg in August—In Autumn—Late hours—Theatres—The Ballet—Statue of Peter the Great—Nothing too hard—Size of St. Petersburg—The Russian people—No hills—The Winter Palace—Japanese curios—The Orloff diamond—Ikon painted by St. Luke—*Gostinoi Dvor*—The Imperial library—Ostromiroff Gospel—Russian and English humour—Alexander Nevski Lavra—Alexander Nevsky—The Lavra cemetery—Academy of Science—University—Hermitage—Asiatic museum—St. Isaac's cathedral—Kazan cathedral—Tombs of Russian princes—The Foundling hospital—The Islands—Peterhoff—Tsarskoi Selo—Pavlovsk—Oranienbaum—Gatchina—Kronstadt—Father Johann—Archangel—The English factory—Gallomania—The German element . 1

CHAPTER II.

THE CZAR'S GERMAN SUBJECTS.

Four Classes of Germans—Nobility—Intellectuals—Commercial—Colonists—Catherine II. offers land—First arrivals—Saratoff—Sarepta—Hussites—Acclimatisation of mustard—Favourable position of German colonists—Interesting statistics—Lutheran pastors—Colonists compared to peas—Germans in the government of Novgorod—Style of architecture—Rapid increase—Intermarriage—Wealthy colonists in Central Russia—Domestic life—Teaching Russians how to work—Old German customs retained—Roman Catholics—Interiors—Language—Anecdotes illustrating German methods 19

CHAPTER III.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN RUSSIA.

Religious freedom—Government—Consistories—Polish consistory—Finland has its own archbishop—Baptists and Memnonites—A pastor's circuit—Charitable organisations—Voluntary collec-

PAGE

tions—Pastor's duties—The Evangelical Hospital at St. Petersburg—Other institutions—Lutheran colonists—Pastor's periodical visits—Anecdote of delayed funeral—Lutheran professors—Steppe circuits—Roman Catholics at Kursk—The Castle of Marino—Architecture of Lutheran churches—The Lutheran church at Kisheneff—A vine-clad parsonage 30

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEASANTS OF GREAT RUSSIA.

The patriarchal family—Each government its own costume—The real *moujik*—Influence of large towns—The isba—Chimneys—Straw roofs—Carved woodwork—Stoves—Vapour baths—Bathing in a bread oven—Gardens—Interiors—Whitewash—Love of bright colours—Lace curtains—Description of a home—Pure air—Russian and English poor compared—Domestic animals—Strange cradles—Length of an isba's life—Destruction of villages by fire—Sturdy womanhood—Marriage—Old customs—The land question—Why the Russians are lazy—An elegant drink—Love of music—Flax—The peasant mother—Western ways—Peasant girls and rouge 37

CHAPTER V.

FINN AND SLAV.

The Lake district—Roman historians—Ingrians—The Finnish character—Anecdotes—I am reminded of Japan—Effect of drink on a Russian—Famished eyes—Superstitions—White-headed children—De Custine and the Finns—Peasants of the Lake District—Fishing—Hunting—Bears—Deer and Elk—Food of the northern peasants—Finnish tastes 58

CHAPTER VI.

FACTORIES AND FACTORY HANDS.

The other end of the Nevsky Prospect—Village of Rebatskoi—Are we in Siberia?—Suburban peasants—The factories—English colony—English church—English enterprise—Chief industries of St. Petersburg—Girls in chocolate factories—Two hundred thousand workpeople—Morozoff cotton factory near Tver—Tolstoi's opinion—Morozoff theatre—Berg cotton factory—New buildings for workpeople—Machinery brought from England—Enamel work factory at St. Petersburg—Effects of the war. . 66

CHAPTER VII.

TORJOK.

The women of Torjok—Torjok slippers—Embroidery—Silver medals—A visit to the School of Embroidery—Girls at their work—How the School of Embroidery is conducted—Length of training required—The Summer colony—Working hours—Christmas tree

PAGE

—Drawbacks—Leather work—Badges for Russian soldiers and sailors—Officers' uniforms—Nuns' work—Work done in the peasant homes—Women brickmakers—The crowning glory of Torjok—French cooking—Grilled chicken—Poushkin . . . 74

CHAPTER VIII.

TVER.

Population—"Glorious historical past"—Churches—Archæological museum—Interesting remains—Curious iron ring—Slav tombs—Pillow money-chests—Ink-pots of the Middle Ages—Beard tax—Enamel work of sixteenth century—Ancient candlestands—Tver costumes—Veils—Pearls—Lace—Pearls from the rivers—Importance of Russia in history of lace—Researches of a Russian lady—Needle lace—Cushion lace—Byzantine lace—Lithuanian lace—Influence of Peter the Great—Lace workers—Tver leather—English tanners—Russian boots versus English boots—Church bells of the Middle Ages—The bells of Moscow—The far-famed Stergensky cross—A Volga reservoir—Japanese prisoners—Monasteries of the Middle Ages—A charming convent—Happy nuns—A romance of Tver—Mausoleum of a Russian hero—Tver and India 81

CHAPTER IX.

MOSCOW.

The largest town in Europe—Rivals—The first stone house—Italian influence—Herberstein—Conflagrations—Population in eighteenth century—A phœnix—A city of merchants—Two Moscows—More shops than Amsterdam—The Kremlin wall—The Gate of the Redeemer—Sewing for the soldiers—A daughter of Princess Alice—The Red Cross—The Queen of Bells—The Czar of Cannons—An English governess—Classical School for girls—Greek tragedies—English novels—Influence of English governesses in Russia—Russian ideals—St. Basil the Blessed, "A mosque," "A box of confectionery," "A nightmare"—The University—Lomonosoff—The opera—The Imperial theatre—Theatre of Russian drama—Moscow's Regent Street—Rapid improvements—Russia's head and Russia's heart—Cathedral of St. Saviour—Rumianefsky museum—National costumes—Archives—The real father of Russian history—Tretiakoff gallery—Open on Sundays—The most striking picture—The Troitzko-Sergiefsky lavra—Besieged by the Poles—Shelters Peter the Great—Shrine of the founder—Thirteen churches—Wall with nine bastions—Infant pilgrims 98

CHAPTER X.

NOVGOROD THE GREAT.

First impressions—A peep into the past—Origin of the republic—An exception to the rule—A spirit of enterprise—Conquered tribes

PAGE

—The merchandise of Asia—Pride of the Novgorodians—Tatar hordes—Lake Ilmen—The Volkhoff and the Kama—The Novgorod museum—Eight hundred skulls—M. Peredolsky and the ancient Slavs—Stone implements—Boomerangs—Rare oil lamps—Fetiches—Traces of prehistoric man—Before the use of verbs—Laws written upon skins—The cathedral of St. Sophia—The so-called *golosniks*—M. Peredolsky's theory—The prophetic hand—The Znamensky cathedral—Stone balls—Hanseatic remains—Hanseatic merchants and Novgorod—A strange little nest—Hutinsky monastery—Ivan the Terrible—The boyars of Novgorod—Fall of Novgorod—Fate of the citizens—The Novgorod of to-day—Pig-sties and electricity 113

CHAPTER XI.

STARIA RUSSA.

The sanatorium—One of the oldest towns in Russia—Salt works—An old process—Twig walls—A Christian church—Palaces of wood—A Russian heroine—The fate of Marfa's sons—At the railway station—A gigantic stove 140

CHAPTER XII.

PSKOFF.

Galoshes—No tourists—Ancient walls—Sister republics—The great bell—Fall of Pskoff—Speech of Vassili—Fate of the people—Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul—St. Nicholas—An ancient monastery—Rare frescoes—Opinion of connoisseurs—An old recipe for fresco painting—M. Plushkin's collection of curios—Coins—Historical trophies—The embarrassment of riches—Freemasons in Russia—A regiment of Amazons—A Russian orchestra—The first newspaper in Pskoff—Pskoff and America—Pogankini palace—A remarkable picture—Palæolithic remains—Buried treasure—A thrice-walled city—Poushkin's grandfather—Poushkin and Pskoff—School for Russian peasants—The mayor of Pskoff—Russian furniture—The pastor's wife . . 145

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PECHORSKY MONASTERY.

Discovery of the catacombs—The monastic dell—Mushrooms—Flax—Isborsk—Drive from Pechora to the monastery—Our *isvoschik*—The monastic inn—A woman in a monastery—The archimandrite—The cathedral—In the catacombs—Treasures—Ivan the Terrible's purse—An ancient bell—The Empress Anne's carriage—Subduing the flesh—The drawbridge—Monastic fare—The village schoolmaster 173

PAGE

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SETUKESE ESTS OF PECHORA.

The town of Pechora—Since the days of Truvor—National type—No ethnographical separation—Former Catholics—The Est language—Livonian Ests—The greatest living authority—Folk-lore—Dr. Hurst's labours—"Rubbish and Gossip"—"Origines Livoniæ"—A priest's testimony—Administration—Isborskaya Volost—Ailments—Character—No written literature—A girl's dowry—A mother's objection to schools—Dress—Chief occupation—Old horses—Scorn for fishermen—Weaving—Hunting—Disappearance of forest land—A national failing—A remarkable fact—Music—The harp; its supposed origin—General characteristics—Want of tact—Their greatest fault 184

CHAPTER XV.

ROSTOFF THE GREAT.

Origin—Introduction of Christianity—Difficulties met with—A hundred years later—The kremlin—Uspensky church—Relics of early days—A remarkable belfry—The largest bell—Other churches—The museum—Samovars—A *vÆchun*—Boyars' caps—The lake—The palace of Philaret—An interesting convent—How the nuns support themselves—A nun's adopted daughter—Our hotel; Waiters—At the railway station; Bound for Manchuria 196

CHAPTER XVI.

YAROSLAV AND KOSTROMA.

Origin of Yaroslav—English merchants—Church of St. Elias—The Demidoff Lyceum—Its director—Historical ground—Dutch weavers—Ancient ikons—Paying toll—First theatre in Russia—Sketch of the founder's life—Difficulties—The Russian Garrick—Volkoff's success—Popular enthusiasm—An "all-round" man—At St. Petersburg—Going to school—First theatre in the capital—Moscow—Catherine II. and the theatre—Memorial tablet—Volkoff's likeness to Peter the Great—His plays—Bobrikoff and Plehve—Boulevard on the banks of the Volga—Passengers to Archangel—An avenue of birch trees—First sight of Kostroma—The Ipatieff monastery—Marfa, the wife of Philaret—Coronation of Michael—"There's his doll!"—Reservists—Oldest church in Kostroma—A thank-offering—Kostroma in the seventeenth century—*A Life for the Czar*—Glinka—The prettiest spot on the Volga 204

PAGE

CHAPTER XVII.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES.

Human ant-hills—Artisans—Reputation enjoyed by the artisans of Yaroslav—"La petite industrie"—The purest Great Russians—Poushkin's theory—Dwellings of the industrial classes—Model cottages—No begging—Yaroslav millionaires—Carpenters—Furniture-making—Japanese spoons—Basket-making—Mat-making—Russian foot-gear—Cutlery—Sharp practice—Sickles—Samovars—Market-gardening—Chicory—Kaluga—Vegetables—Islands of the Volga—Cattle—Clay pottery—High boots—Spinning—Lace-making 217

CHAPTER XVIII.

NIJNI NOVGOROD, KAZAN, AND EKATERINBURG.

Early history—A legend—Menin and Pojarsky—Philaret—The Strogonoff family—Their origin—De Custine's account of the Fair—The Exhibition of 1896—The Kremlin—Situation—Kazan—The siege—University—Factories—A wealthy Tatar—Tatar ladies—Perm—Eternal snows—Ekaterinburg—A holy picture from Mount Athos—A convent—The Lady Superior—Candle-making—Painting ikons—Nuns as agriculturists . . . 226

CHAPTER XIX.

TULA.

Importance of Tula industries—Gingerbread—Samovars—A great mechanic—Fruit trees—A government town—Church of the Assumption—Reasons for our short stay—A visit to Count Leo Tolstoi—Ringing the bell—Autumn leaves—Spinoza—American ministers—Emerson—The days of telephones—The best of life—Buddha—Tolstoi and Spencer—America's best men—Utter rubbish—Glad to go—Legend of the Great Bear—The Babi sect—Topic of the war is avoided—Tolstoi's German origin—In the siege of Sebastopol—Truth for truth's sake—Influence of Auerbach—The Countess Tolstoi—One of the world's masterpieces—Copyright—Why English translations are so poor—Tolstoi's village—Interiors—Pretty country—Madame Bentzon's visit to Tolstoi—Charles Dickens—George Eliot—A Frenchman's opinion . . 237

CHAPTER XX.

KURSK.

A provincial town—The Black-Earth district—Origin of Kursk—Theodosius; his flight to Kieff—Situation of Kursk—Wealthy tradesmen—Jews—First-class travellers—A triumphal arch—The good angel of Kursk—A model hospital—A serious drawback—Too much clean linen—Wounded soldiers—Opinions about Nicholas II.

PAGE

—Villages round Kursk compared to Kaffir settlements—Peasant life in the Black-Earth district—Village streets—Willow trees—Tall grass used as fuel—Fresh hay—Building with bricks—Large villages—Apples—Not enough cattle—Bees—Forest honey—The intellectual proletariat — Technical schools wanted — Village priests—Literary celebrities—Tamboff horse-breeding—Half the horses in the world 247

CHAPTER XXI.

KHARKOFF.

Effect of the sunlight—Population of Kharkoff—University—Railway engineers—First historical reference—The great fair—High rents—Changes of temperature—Bad servants—Esthonian servants—Letts—Famous professors—Handsome churches—A holy picture—The richest sheep-breeder—Philanthropy—People's Palace—Shops of Kharkoff—Favourable position for trade—Little Russians—Day dreaming—Lovers of Nature—Love songs—Bright colour—The honoured guest—Comparison between Great Russians and Little Russians—A great delicacy—Position of the women—Strange customs—Increase of population—Absence of the birch tree—Beetroot—Attractions of Poltava . 256

CHAPTER XXII.

SEBASTOPOL.

From Kharkoff to Sebastopol—Steppes of South Russia—Steppes of the Crimea—Glorious sunshine—Simpheropol—Museum and library—Crimean agriculture—The fruit garden of Russia—Melons—Bakshisarai—Scene at the railway station—Mixed population—Books on the Crimea—Sebastopol in 1873—Inkerman—Tunnels—Hotel Vetzel—Russian invalids—The Crimean Alpine Club—Practical guide-books—No Cook's tourists—Museum of relics from Crimean war—French cemetery—Crimean heroes—English cemetery—Cathgart's Hill—Visitors' book—Beautiful flowers—Gardener's enthusiasm—Reading the inscriptions—Youthful soldiers—Greek colonists—Better than friends—Russell's "Crimea"—Charge of the Light Brigade—Port Arthur, not Sebastopol—View of Sebastopol from Cathgart's Hill—A Greek temple—Eye-witnesses quoted—"Keep out of Sebastopol"—English officer's testimony—Anecdote—Sebastopol at the close of the siege—A women's battery—Kinglake and Russian bravery 266

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RUSSIAN POMPEII.

Chersonese—Citizens' oath—Kingdom of the Bosphorus—Mithradates the Great—Milner's "Crimea"—Terra-cotta figurines—Euripides

PAGE

—Iphigenia—Gibbon's interpretation of the legend—Excavations—Remarkable skulls—Catacombs—Sarcophagi—Cupid and Psyche—Greeks and Romans—Shipwrecked Greeks—Ovid's report of a lecture—Opening a coffin—The Byzantine period—Where Vladimir was baptised—The Church of St. Vladimir—Alexander of Servia—Fresco paintings—Back to Sebastopol—German colonists 284

CHAPTER XXIV.

BALACLAVA.

Crimean veterans—Anecdotes—The Crimean shawl—Nelson—Balaclava in 1796—A reel in a bottle—First railway in Russia—English navvies—Sufferings of English soldiers—Turkish methods—English and French camp systems—French musicians—Usefulness of music—Scarlett's three hundred—Proposed sanatorium at Balaclava—Crimean weather—The *Times* correspondent—The prosaic present—Mud baths—The battle of Balaclava—"See what we French have done for you". 303

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RUSSIAN RIVIERA.

From Sebastopol to Yalta—Changing scenery—The Italy of Russia—The valley of Baidar—Warmest spot in the Crimea—Watering the horses—The Baidar Gateway—Sunrise—Russian taste—Like the Dolomites—Earthquakes—Tatar huts—Tatar carts—A "Little Versailles"—Cimiez—Aloupka—The Crimean Alhambra—A Russian wife for an English peer—Aloupka compared with Nervi—Death traps—Delicate children—Fleecing visitors—Marble lions—Yalta—Our hotel—An incident—Russians at home—The governor's wife—Paris dresses—Playing at simplicity—Variegated cauliflowers—Natives of Yalta—Livadia—The Empress at home—Beauty of the sky—Orianda—The two Massandras—Refreshments for tourists—Increase in the number of visitors—The Botanical Gardens at Nikita—Magaratch—Crimean wines—Vine growing—Walnuts—Gourzûf—The "Seven hotels"—Sea bathing—Poushkin's tree—Aloushta—Its climate—The grape cure—Archæological remains—Fast driving—Off to Odessa 311

CHAPTER XXVI.

THEODOSIA AND KERCH.

Through carriages to St. Petersburg—A commercial port—Russian visitors to Theodosia—A great painter—Museum of antiquities—Aiversofsky picture gallery—Inscription on the painter's tomb—Kaffa—Kerch—Hotels—Hill of Mithradates—Fishing industry—Medicinal properties of the mud—Charitable institu-

PAGE

tions—Pantecapæum—Strabo—The Kerch museum—In the Hermitage—Tumuli—Catacombs—Church of St. John the Baptist—Ancient church vessels—Manuscripts—A Tatar legend . 338

CHAPTER XXVII.

ODESSA.

Saloon cabins—Bound for Odessa—Early history of Odessa—A mushroom city—The Duc de Richelieu; his remarkable talents—English training—Growth of the city—Trade—Commercial school—The first theatre—Turkish war—Volunteers—A black page—Smugglers—A sorrowful parting—Bismarck—On the quay—The duke's garden—Richelieu's successor—The first newspaper—Museum of archæology—Generosity of Count Woronzoff—Cholera—Crimean war—The allied fleets—Bombardment of Odessa—General Osten-Saken—The southern Palmyra—Mark Twain at Odessa—The railway station—East winds—Low death-rate—Export of grain—Factories—College for women—School for peasants—Book shops—Jews—The Italian opera—Amusements—Statue of Catherine II.—Statue of Poushkin . 348

CHAPTER XXVIII.

KISHENEFF.

Bessarabia—The Carpathians—Heated trains—Engineer's explanation—Size of Kisheneff—First impressions—The first Russian business house—Jewish lawyers—The old bazaar—Jewish faces—An interesting conversation—Tissot and the Jews—Hebrew and German—Poushkin at Kisheneff—A *Judenfreund*—Story told at Kisheneff—Sulphur springs—New museum—A sanatorium—Rich peasants—The grapes of Kisheneff—Comfortable railway carriages 362

CHAPTER XXIX.

KIEFF.

Isolation of Kieff—Origin and early history—Nestor—St. Andrew and Russian baths—Nestor's account—Olga—Chief events in her life—Gibbon—Karamsin—Wholesale baptism—St. Sophia's—Local historians—Mistaken idea of its size—Its cupolas—Description of the edifice—Mosaics—Frescoes—Extraordinary frescoes on the staircase—What remains of Ancient Kieff—The Golden Gateway—The Cathedral of St. Vladimir—The Church of St. Andrew—The university—The Botanical Gardens—A Kieff industry—The "Kieff Jordan"—Pilgrims—The lavra—Its history—Entombed alive—The catacombs—A famous ikon—Printing—The monastic inn—Wealth of the lavra—A cell—The streets of Kieff 370

PAGE

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CAUCASUS.

As large as France—Caucasian mountains—Highest peaks—Glaciers—Beautiful scenery—Conquest by Russia—Shamil—Anecdote—Count Woronzoff—Population of the Caucasus—Petrovsk—Bathing—Derbent—Labelled "Bordeaux"—Old bastions—Persian carpets—Baku—Native town—Naphtha—Wind in Baku—Antiquities—Nobels' factory—The Balakhany plain—Speculators in oil—Borjom—Mineral waters of Borjom—Batoum—Harbour—Description of the town—Compared with Yalta—Future of Batoum—Tiflis—Public buildings—Paintings—A temple of glory—Silkworms—Zionsky cathedral—Church of St. David—Gardens—Poushkin—Crossing the Caucasus—History of the Darial Pass—An ancient burial ground—A legend—Story told of Poushkin—Ananour—Descended from the Crusaders—A beautiful valley—Lermontoff's opera *The Demon*—The highest post-station—Above the clouds—A legend of the mountains—Legend of the chaos of stones—The Darial Pass—Vladikafkaz—Mineral Waters—Kieslovodsk—Piatigorsk—Lermontoff—Palatial hotels—Climate 408

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A prophetic ikon in the cupola of the Cathedral of St. Sophia, Novgorod . . . . . *Frontispiece*

The Nicholas Bridge over the Neva, St. Petersburg *Facing page* 3

Alexander Bridge over the Neva, St. Petersburg . „ „ 3

The Neva in winter, St. Petersburg . . . „ „ 3

The Nevsky Prospect, St. Petersburg . . . „ „ 9

St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg . . . „ „ 9

A church at Peterhoff . . . . . „ „ 11

The fountains at Peterhoff . . . . . „ „ 13

Fountain at Peterhoff . . . . . „ „ 13

A troïka . . . . . „ „ 15

English Church, Archangel . . . . . „ „ 15

Northern fisher-folk . . . . . „ „ 63

Street mending in St. Petersburg . . . . „ „ 66

A begging nun, St. Petersburg . . . . „ „ 66

A tram-car, St. Petersburg . . . . . „ „ 66

An omnibus, St. Petersburg . . . . . „ „ 66

A monastery at Tver . . . . . „ „ 83

The wharf at Tver . . . . . „ „ 83

The Kremlin, Moscow . . . . . „ „ 102

Another view of the Kremlin . . . . . „ „ 102

Ladies working for the soldiers in the Imperial Palace, Moscow . . . . . „ „ 104

The Czar of Cannons in the Kremlin Square, Moscow „ „ 104

The Church of St. Basil, Moscow . . . . „ „ 106

Cathedral of St. Sophia at Novgorod . . . „ „ 124

The Znamensky Cathedral, Novgorod . . . „ „ 124

The Archbishop of Novgorod . . . . „ „ 136

View of the Cathedral and fortress, Pskoff . . „ „ 165

Interior of the Pogankini Palace, Pskoff . . „ „ 165

The Pechorsky Monastery . . . . . „ „ 178

Pilgrims at the Pechorsky Monastery . . . „ „ 178

Pastor Hurst, D.D., of St. Petersburg . . . „ „ 186

Interior of Uspensky Cathedral, Rostoff . . „ „ 198

Monastery at Rostoff the Great . . . . „ „ 201

View of Rostoff the Great . . . . . „ „ 201

Uspensky Cathedral and bell-tower, Rostoff	*Facing page*		207
A Tartar woman, Kazan	„	„	232
Artisan with brooms, Yaroslav	„	„	232
Pedlar hawking chains, keys, and padlocks	„	„	232
Pedlar hawking brushes	„	„	232
A view of Tula	„	„	248
A nunnery, Kursk	„	„	248
Catherine Street, Kharkoff	„	„	258
Rock Monastery at Inkerman	„	„	270
The English Cemetery, Sebastopol	„	„	277
The French Cemetery, Sebastopol	„	„	277
The Monastery of St. George, Sebastopol	„	„	305
Balaclava	„	„	305
Entrance to Woronzoff Palace, Aloupka	„	„	316
Carriage road after Baidar Gateway	„	„	316
The park at Aloupka	„	„	316
The Rose Walk, Massandra	„	„	316
View of Yalta	„	„	324
The Imperial Palace, Livadia	„	„	324
Kievsky Gateway, Tula	„	„	338
The statue of Catherine II., Odessa	„	„	360
Richelieu Street, Odessa	„	„	360
The Theatre, Odessa	„	„	360
Entrance to the Theatre, Odessa	„	„	360
The best shops in Kisheneff	„	„	363
Prison at Kisheneff	„	„	363
Bessarabian peasants, Kisheneff	„	„	369
A native of Bessarabia at Kisheneff	„	„	369
Peasant women on the road to Kisheneff	„	„	369
Bessarabian cottages	„	„	369
University of Kieff	„	„	391
Monument of St. Vladimir, Kieff	„	„	391
The Dnieper at Kieff	„	„	406
Old part of the Krestiatik, Kieff	„	„	406
Cossacks	„	„	423

MAPS.

Railway Map of Russia	*To face page*	1
Map of the Environs of St. Petersburg	„	16
Map of the Crimea	„	268
Map of the Caucasus	„	410

RUSSIA.

TRAVELS AND STUDIES.

CHAPTER I.

ST. PETERSBURG.

Rousseau's advice—Russian stoves—German traveller's opinion—Warmth o houses and public buildings—St. Petersburg in August—In Autumn—Late hours—Theatres—The Ballet—Statue of Peter the Great—Nothing too hard —Size of St. Petersburg—The Russian people—No hills—The Winter Palace—Japanese curios—The Orloff diamond—Ikon painted by St. Luke —*Gostinoi Dvor*—The Imperial library—Ostromiroff Gospel—Russian and English humour—Alexander Nevski Lavra—Alexander Nevsky—The Lavra cemetery—Academy of Science—University—Hermitage—Asiatic museum—St. Isaac's cathedral—Kazan cathedral—Tombs of Russian princes—The Foundling hospital—The Islands—Peterhoff—Tsarskoi Selo—Pavlovsk—Oranienbaum — Gatchina — Kronstadt — Father Johann—Archangel—The English factory—Gallomania—The German element.

It was Rousseau who made the remark that if people travelled for pleasure and could choose their own time, they would be wise to visit Naples in summer and St. Petersburg in winter. Yet the majority of English and American tourists do exactly the reverse; they are to be seen shivering in the dank Italian streets in January and February, often without their winter overcoats, whilst the Italians themselves are going about in furs; they plunge, after a quick walk in hot sunshine, into icy sculpture galleries and freezing marble churches, and it follows that they have to take the consequences. I have known a whole side of a long *table d'hôte* in Rome occupied by sore-throated tourists. Had these but followed the suggestion

of Rousseau, and spent the winter in snug St. Petersburg, they would have fared better. There the houses are thoroughly warmed by those gigantic stoves never met with out of Russia; stoves of which a German traveller who visited Russia in the early forties remarked: "They are, in their way, the most complete things that can be imagined." They are built into the walls of the houses and covered with glazed tiles. One stove in the wall between two rooms serves to warm both; the heated air passes through many passages and gradually warms the huge mass of stone of which the stove is composed; once warm, it retains the heat for a whole day; as the rooms are so well warmed plenty of extra wraps are needed for the street. Indoors, lighter clothing is worn in Russia than in England, and evening dresses are donned without a shiver on the coldest days. Public buildings are as warm and comfortable as private houses, and visitors can spend as much time as they like in churches, museums and picture galleries, without fear of a chill. Even the English church has double windows, and is so warm that the congregation leave their furs in an outer room adapted for the purpose; very different from the English church in Rome, where deadly draughts cut you across the back of your neck, and force the wisest to beat a retreat before the sermon.

And what do those tourists know of St. Petersburg who, arriving at Kronstadt in the month of August, pace the deserted streets of the Russian capital for a couple of days before going on to Moscow? Every inhabitant who can afford it leaves St. Petersburg for the summer months. All the fine black, long-tailed horses, all the smart equipages that give life to the streets disappear with their owners. Even the number of the second-class droshkies is reduced by one half; the *isvoschiks* go home to their friends in the country and are busy at work in the fields. If you happen to meet with a well-dressed person in one of the streets you may rest assured that he or she is a foreigner like yourself. There are few sights more depress-

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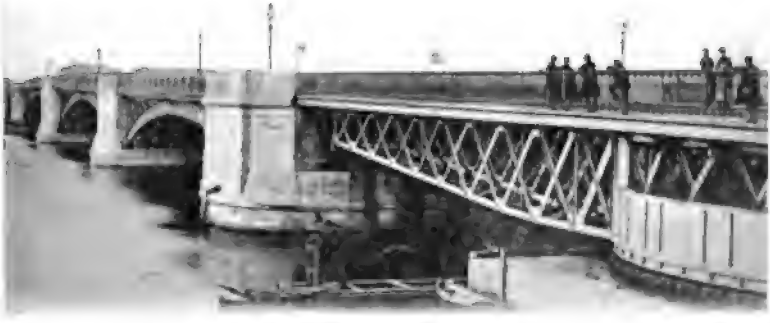
The Nicholas Bridge over the Neva, St. Petersburg.



Alexander Bridge over the Neva, St. Petersburg.

The Neva in winter, St. Petersburg.

[*To face page* 3.

ing than that of St. Petersburg in August. As for the weather, it is execrable; glaring sun shines blindingly down upon the pavement for a few hours in the day; the remainder is cold and sunless, and biting polar winds catch you at every street corner. If your window rejoices in a balcony the air is never sufficiently genial for you to sit there. In September the inhabitants begin to return; prettily-dressed children make their appearance; high-stepping horses are occasionally seen, and the thoroughfares gradually assume a more animated look.

October is a busy month; workmen are in all the houses sealing up the windows for the winter. When they are gone you can no longer open your windows as before; only one little pane can be opened, and you must climb on to your table to reach it. During the first week in September everybody is buying winter clothing, and the shops are busy. Furs, which have been sent to the fur stores for the summer, are sent home to their owners, and a great trade is done in galoshes and over-shoes. October and November are dreary months in St. Petersburg; thick white mists hang over the streets, and people rise late, for it is dark till nine o'clock. Foreign ambassadors try to avoid these months, and if they can possibly manage it, keep away from their embassies till December. Residents say that there is more illness during the autumn than in all the rest of the year put together. During the last few years the weather of St. Petersburg has been exceptionally mild, as indeed it has been everywhere else; but a good healthy winter means plenty of snow and not a wheeled vehicle on the streets between December and March.

Venice is said to be the best place for people with nerves on account of its freedom from noisy traffic, but St. Petersburg in winter is better still, for snow lies thick upon the streets for months together, and the traffic is absolutely noiseless, while the air is delightfully pure and exhilarating. But as soon as the snow has disappeared the noise in the streets is unbearable, on account of the rough cobbles with which they are paved; it goes on all through the

night, for the people of St. Petersburg keep very late hours. Young men and women of the middle class pay calls between ten and eleven o'clock in the evening, and I have stayed in houses where visitors seldom rose to go before three in the morning. In this the Russians resemble the Spaniards, who think nothing of sitting up all night. In summer the tramp, tramp, peculiar to Russian horses is livelier during the night than in the day, and it only ceases for one hour, between five and six in the morning. Clerks of both sexes in banks, government, and business houses, manage to do with remarkably little sleep; most of them are at their work by 9 a.m. They are fond of amusement, and spend half their earnings in theatres, operas, and the ballet. The town theatres are closed for the summer months, but summer theatres in the suburbs take their place. The St. Petersburg ballet is the best in the world; the dancers are mostly young women between twenty and thirty years of age, though they appear much younger upon the stage. They retire at the age of thirty-six with a comfortable little fortune. The best performers, who take the important parts, get large salaries.

Peter the Great allotted fifty square versts for the site of St. Petersburg. The chief street, the Nevsky Prospect, is more than three miles in length. According to Heym, the town was twenty-four versts in circumference in 1784. There never has been, and there never will be, anything petty about Russia, her towns, or her people. Every town that I shall attempt to describe in this volume has wide and long streets, large squares, and plenty of room. The people are like their country, they have plenty of faults, but they are the faults of generous open-hearted natures; the Russians are in many respects very like the English, but they are not insular. Force of circumstance has made them more diplomatic than ourselves. Patience and perseverance are not wanting, though they are often found alongside of extreme laziness. When the architect of Peter the Great's statue on the bank of the Neva had conceived the design of placing the statue on a huge rock

instead of a pedestal, he carefully examined the country round St. Petersburg in the hope of finding a detached mass of granite large enough for his purpose. After much research he succeeded in finding a stupendous crag half buried in a marshy forest some miles distant. Expense was no hindrance to Catherine II.; she had the marsh drained, the forest cleared, and a road four versts long made to the Gulf of Finland. The great boulder* was set in motion on large friction balls and grooves of metal, by means of pulleys with windlasses worked by four hundred men. In this way it was conveyed, with forty men seated on top, twelve hundred feet a day to the shore. It was then embarked on a nautical machine, transported eight versts by water, and landed near the spot where it now supports the statue of Peter the Great. The time occupied in bringing it was nearly six months. The rock, when landed, was forty-two feet long at its base and thirty-six at the top, eleven broad, and seventeen high; it is said to have weighed 1,500 tons. A book was written to commemorate the event, and illustrated with engravings; I believe it is still to be seen in the Imperial library, under the title, "Monument erected to the Glory of Peter the Great in 1777." I have given this lengthy description because the rock and the achievement are typical of Russia and the Russians.

St. Petersburg is built upon absolutely flat ground; it has not even an artificial hill like the Kreuzberg, of which Berlin is so proud; its site was a marsh till Peter the Great reclaimed it. St. Isaac's Cathedral rests upon piles, and one side of it has been steadily sinking for years. The beautiful Neva serves as an overflow for the waters of Lake Ladoga into the Gulf of Finland; when the water passes out too quickly St. Petersburg is flooded.

The mighty Winter Palace of Nicholas I. was destroyed by fire in 1837, and valuables were consumed on that occasion to the amount of twenty-five million roubles. The present Winter Palace, where Nicholas II. spends part

* See Coxe's description of this boulder.

of every winter, is connected with Catherine II. s Palace, the Hermitage, by a gallery. Passing through this gallery in 1873, an English lady-traveller, Mrs. Guthrie, stopped to admire a large collection of Japanese curios, amongst which stood a fine pair of vases of Russian manufacture, to which an amusing notice was affixed; it ran as follows: "These vases were sent by the Emperor Alexander I. as a present to the Tycoon, but by him returned, with the announcement that it was impossible for the Tycoon to accept a present from an inferior." The Winter Palace contains many interesting war pictures. In its *sokrovnik*, or treasury, there is a sceptre with one of the largest diamonds in Europe, 194¾ carat; this is known as the Orloff diamond; it was originally the eye of the lion that crouched before the throne of the Great Mogul. Another treasure preserved there is the crown of Catherine II., which cost a million roubles: Catherine was the only Russian lady who ever wore a crown. On a desk in one of the large halls visitors are shown an ikon, under glass, said to have been painted by St. Luke; it was presented to Paul I. when he became a Knight of Malta. The right hand of John the Baptist is also preserved in the Winter Palace.

The famous *Gostinoi Dvor* is a collection of two hundred shops, built in a square with a large court in its centre: a Europeanised Asiatic bazaar. It dates from the year 1755.

The Imperial Library, built by Catherine II., was begun in 1791 and finished in 1810; the site was formerly occupied by an Imperial *Orangerie*. There is accommodation for eight hundred readers, and it has thirty-one rooms. It contains a million and a half bound volumes, besides fifty thousand manuscripts, and a hundred thousand engravings; perhaps its greatest treasure is the so-called Ostromiroff Gospel. In referring to a collection of caricatures in this library, the above-mentioned lady-traveller remarked: "The Russians have a keen sense of humour, appreciable to English folk *because it is akin to their own;*

there is none of the *triste* wit which emanates from France and Italy, consisting of big heads, shrunken bodies, large noses and wide mouths. The French caricatures appeal to the mirth or fears of an infant, the English and Russian to the lively imagination of man."

Another lion of St. Petersburg is the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, originally a monastery begun in 1710, after the conquest of Sweden by Peter the Great: its cathedral was built in 1724; it was turned into a lavra in 1797. There are only three lavras in Russia, the Alexander Nevsky, the Kieff Lavra, and the Troitzka Lavra outside Moscow. I know them all three well, but it is hard to make any comparison; each has its own particular interest for the traveller. In this one the chief object of interest is the silver-covered sarcophagus of Alexander Nevsky, with its coverlet of diamonds. Alexander, son of the Grand Prince Yaroslav, defended his country against Sweden in the beginning of the thirteenth century. "It was in her days of calamity," wrote Karamsin, "that Russia's glory shone forth; Alexander was endowed by nature with remarkable courage, with majestic beauty, and with the vigorous arm of a Samson. The sight of him inspired the people with sentiments of love and veneration. His sonorous voice resounded like a trumpet in the midst of the national assemblies" (of Novgorod). The Livonian Knights, the Finns, and the Swedes were united against Novgorod. Alexander went out to meet the King of Sweden, wounded him on the arm, and conquered his army on the banks of the Neva, near Ladoga. From that day he was called Alexander Nevsky. Later on, he delivered Novgorod and Pskoff from the Teutonic Knights and afterwards, in the course of a few days, conquered the Lithuanians seven times. All this time the rest of Russia was under the Tatar yoke. Alexander went with his brother to visit the Tatar Khan, who held his court near Lake Baikal, in what is now central Siberia; he returned in 1249. The Khan was so pleased with Alexander that he allowed him to keep Central Russia, including Kieff. Alexander died

before his time, worn out by warfare and anxiety for the welfare of his people. When he felt death approaching he took the monastic vows. He duly received the title of saint, and was placed among the tutelar deities of Russia. For centuries after his death pious Russians were in the habit of attributing all events that proved felicitous to their country to the protecting influence of this sainted prince. "The great superiority of his character," it has been remarked, "was evinced as well by the defeats which took place immediately on his decease as by the victories which distinguished the Russian arms during his life."

In the cemetery of this lavra are buried some of Russia's greatest men. Suvaroff rests here, and Kriloff, the fable poet; also Dostoievsky, Glinka, Tchaikovsky, and Rubinstein. Of the monuments, that of Tchaikovsky is considered the finest. Attached to the lavra is an academy for priests. Three hundred priests carry on the church services. There is also a library containing many ancient manuscripts of great value, among which is a very old hand-written document from St. Sophia's at Novgorod. In all there are a hundred and fifty thousand printed books and four thousand manuscripts.

The Academy of Science on the banks of the Neva was opened in 1725. It was projected by Peter the Great, and opened by his wife, Catherine I. It contains a valuable library, a cabinet of medals, a museum of mineralogy, and a botanical museum especially rich in Siberian flora. It possesses among other treasures a huge globe, the work of Euler, and said to be one of the largest in the world. In the museum of zoology there is, besides the Prejivalsky horses, and the far-famed mammoth, the finest collection of stuffed bears in existence. The Academy offers prizes yearly to the amount of two hundred thousand roubles for scientific work.

The St. Petersburg University was founded in 1736, and completed in 1819, for faculties of history, philology, physics, mathematics, law, and Eastern languages. It has a rich library of more than a hundred and thirty-four

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The Nevsky Prospect, St. Petersburg.

St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg.

[*To face page* 9.

thousand books, and also possesses a unique collection of material in connection with prehistoric man, from the Ladoga district; the work of professors from Western Europe, who visited Russia for the purpose.

The Hermitage is a handsome palace, built by Catherine II., "for the recreation of her leisure in the conversation of men of learning, and for the preservation of the productions of art." Its upper rooms now serve the purpose of a National Gallery, and contain many pictures of world-wide fame by such artists as Rembrandt, Ostade, Wouvermann, Claude Lorraine, Caracci, Dominichino, Tintoretto, Rubens and Cuyp. On the ground floor there is the Asiatic museum, and the arsenal. In the former visitors may inspect the beautiful door of Tamerlane's tomb; the ancient Slav jewellery that has been excavated of recent yearsin the vicinity of Kieff; a remarkable collection of bows and arrows of the Middle Ages—bows with cords as thick as a man's thumb, and screws as large as sausage machines, for making them taut; and arrows, not with points, but with instruments of torture at their tips—iron flowers with knife-like petals, and such-like monstrosities. Most of the foreign curios were purchased by Alexander I. at Paris for the sum of seven million roubles.

The Cathedral of St. Isaac,* and the Cathedral of Kazan, have already been fully described by many travellers. Everyone knows that the Kazan Cathedral was built after the model of St. Peter's at Rome; it is, of course, very much smaller.

The tombs of Peter the Great and his deceased successors are to be seen in the "Peter-Paul" church of the Fortress. Their chief characteristic is their noble simplicity. It has been remarked that the Russian princes are the only ones in Europe who are buried within the walls of a fortress.

The Foundling Hospital of St. Petersburg is of more

* The Cathedral of St. Isaac is built entirely of granite and marble. The pillars of its peristyles are sixty feet high, and have a diameter of seven feet. See Kohl's "Russia."

recent origin than that of Moscow, of which it is practically a branch. Travellers who are interested in the early stages of man should make a point of visiting one or the other; everything of interest with regard to infants may there be seen *en gros*, including the latest and most successful varieties of the infant incubator. The infants received (if they survive) are educated, taught a trade, and cared for till they are competent to go forth into the world as independent bread-winners. There is a maternity hospital in connection with the main building.

In the Delta of the Neva there are some forty islands. These are connected with one another and with St. Petersburg by many fine bridges. The more distant islands have for the last century served as the country retreat of the wealthy citizens. Very charming are the multiform country villas built almost invariably of wood, the far-famed *datchas*.* Each *datcha* has a spacious verandah, hung in summer with beautiful greenhouse flowers, where the family can take their meals in hot weather; each stands in its own leafy garden, and looks the picture of coolness and freshness, with its emerald lawn, its flower-beds, bright with roses and geraniums, its feathery foliage, and its pretty boat-house by the water. Long, shady avenues of graceful trees, whose branches meet overhead, run along the water-side and remind one of Holland. The individual *datchas* would often be completely cut off from their neighbours by water but for fairy-like and rustic bridges, which their owners have thrown across at will. The townspeople who are kept in St. Petersburg by business or poverty love to come out to the islands by the tramcar on summer evenings, and saunter in the green glades till after midnight, when they usually return home by droshky. But the islands, like everything else, have their drawback; they lie low, and are very damp. A mist rises almost every evening about six o'clock, a mist which is not ideal for

* The word *datcha* means a gift. The villas presented by Catherine II. to her many favourites were called *datchas*, because they were her gifts, and this word has become general.

UNIV. OF
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Sandell film.]

A church at Peterhoff.

[*To face page* 11.

health or enjoyment. The shady bowers of the islands are composed chiefly of the graceful mountain ash, the lime tree and the willow. Only people who have money can afford to hire a *datcha* in the islands, for they are very expensive there; a poorish one will not cost less than a thousand roubles for the summer, (which is very short). De Custine wrote in his journal, after visiting the islands in 1839: "I have just returned from visiting the islands. They form an agreeable marsh; never was the vase better concealed by the flowers."

True as it is that one should visit St. Petersburg in winter, it is equally true that the best time to visit Peterhoff, Russia's Versailles, is the summer. We visited Peterhoff on August 16th, 1904. After a train journey of an hour we found ourselves at Peterhoff, with a crowd of cabbies eager to claim us as we stepped out of the station. We chose one and drove to the park, in the centre of which stands the old palace built by Peter the Great. One side of the entire park is washed by the waters of the Gulf of Finland, a branch of the Baltic Sea, and at one end of it, close to the water, is the castle in which Nicholas II. signed the Manifesto of October 30th, 1905. We found watchful soldiers at every corner and by every fountain. Every living person who passed them had to undergo the keenest scrutiny. Yet ladies sat reading under many of the trees, and several young gentlemen were to be seen quietly fishing on the bank of the Baltic. The fountains began to play at three o'clock, and I got some good snapshots of them from our droshky as it moved along, in spite of the fact that permission to take photographs had been refused me at the entrance of the park. The fountains were certainly very beautiful, but the air was too keen and cold to make any fountains attractive. Such luxuries seem to me to be entirely out of place on the shores of the Baltic; to look at them was to shiver, even in August. The private villas of Peterhoff, as well as the imperial pavilions in the park, are most aristocratic and often quite artistic; they are of all colours, choco-

late, drab, white and grey, and built of wood; wooden dwelling-houses are considered more healthy than stone here, as is the case in Siberia. Beautiful flowers hung in festoons from the balconies, but the scenery, the trees, and the biting air all made me feel as if I were in northern Finland rather than in Russia. There were birch trees everywhere, but they had not the charm of the birches in Siberian forests; they were *tristes bouleaux*. Like Russia and the Russian towns the birch tree here looks cheerful only when it is covered with snow—one more reason for visiting Russia in winter. The summer sun of Russia glares cruelly, but it is never truly genial till you get as far south as Kharkoff. The palaces of Peterhoff, by the way, are not equal to those of Versailles. In the town of Peterhoff there is a factory for the polishing of Siberian stones. It was here that the wonderful map of France, exhibited in the Paris Exhibition of 1900, was constructed.

The first bit of railway laid down by the Russians was between St. Petersburg and Tsarskoi Selo, where Peter the Great built one of his finest palaces, and where Nicholas II. resides for some months of every year. Tsarskoi Selo is situated among the Duderhoff hills, at a distance of twenty-two versts from St. Petersburg. The park and gardens of Tsarskoi Selo are among the most beautiful in Russia; hundreds of gardeners are employed in keeping them in order. I need not describe the wonders of the palace as so many travellers have done so before me. At a distance of only a few versts from Tsarskoi Selo is the imperial castle of Pavlovsk, also surrounded by a beautiful park. Pavlovsk is the favourite summer evening resort of St. Petersburg's middle class; all through the warm weather they go there in streams; the handsome railway station is fitted up to accommodate them. Attached to the substantial restaurant is a large concert hall, where the best musicians of Russia perform classical music several evenings a week throughout the summer season. There are special trains for bringing the audience to and from these concerts, which are chiefly orchestral.

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The fountains at Peterhoff.

Fountain at Peterhoff.

[*To face page* 13.

Russians are exceedingly proud of the Pavlovsk park, the avenues of which cover a hundred and eighty versts. Both Tsarskoi Selo and Pavlovsk are favourite *datcha* localities; that is to say, they are rich in artistic summer villas, which are hired by such citizens of St. Petersburg as can afford them. Two other *datcha* localities should be mentioned—Oranienbaum and Gatchina. Oranienbaum is situated on the shore of the Gulf of Finland, a little beyond Peterhoff and thirty-seven versts from St. Petersburg; here there is another "Versailles" to be visited. Gatchina is to-day a town of fifteen thousand inhabitants. In former days its Imperial Palace was the home of the Imperial family almost every year during the autumn months, but Nicholas II. prefers Tsarskoi Selo.

Kronstadt,* the water-gate of St. Petersburg, is situated on the island known as Kettle Island, or *Kotlinoi Ostroff*. Close to the station at Oranienbaum there is a little wharf for passengers crossing to Kronstadt; the fare is fifteen kopecs (threepence). The chief custom house of St. Petersburg is at Kronstadt, and it is here that passengers by sea from England have their baggage examined. Kronstadt is the chief station for the Baltic fleet. Large ships stop here to discharge part of their cargo; the whole surface of the Bay of Kronstadt is covered with ice in winter, except when it is artificially broken. Father Johann lives at Kronstadt. For years past there have been two men in Russia who could say and do what they pleased, Count Leo Tolstoi and Father Johann. The people look upon Father Johann as a saint; they believe that he has power to heal the sick, and many will tell you that they have seen most wonderful cures with their own eyes. The old priest is more than eighty years of age; he is too frail to walk alone in the crowd that flocks to his side the moment he appears in public: soldiers walk on either side of him whenever he is seen in the streets, and they have hard work to keep the crowd from crushing him. When he comes to St. Petersburg his followers stop the traffic in the streets

* Kronstadt has a population of about fifty thousand.

People of all classes travel thousands of miles that he may heal their diseases. If the sick cannot come themselves their friends come instead, and beseech him to pray for them. His eyes are supposed to have miraculous power. By looking into people's faces he can read, not only their thoughts, but their history, and he advises them about the future with such satisfactory results that their faith in him is unbounded. A lady in Switzerland who had a sick son heard of Father Johann, and decided she would go to Kronstadt and ask him to pray for the boy. Friends in St. Petersburg put the matter before the priest, and asked him whether he thought it would be any use for Madame M. to come so far.

"No," he replied. "Let her remain in Switzerland. God can cure her son there. I will pray for her. She need not come."

But the lady was not satisfied; she came to Kronstadt, bringing another lady with her as interpreter. They found rooms in Father Johann's house set apart for people from a distance. Everything was very simple, and the moderate sum of one rouble (2s.) was charged for the night. At four in the morning they were awakened that they might go to the church and join in an early service. Crowds were there when they entered, many of them mothers with screaming babies in their arms. A man came forward and tried to quiet them, but Father Johann gave him a severe look, and told him that it was he who was causing the disturbance. After the service the two ladies went back to their room, and presently Father Johann came to them. He listened while the lady who spoke Russian explained their errand; then he put out both his hands, and drawing Madame M.'s head towards him kissed her gently on the forehead.

"When two or three are gathered together," he said solemnly, and then turning towards an ikon on the wall he began to pray in a voice that was scarcely audible. When he had finished he walked brusquely away. Madame M. followed him, and touching him on the arm, offered him

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A troïka.

English Church, Archangel.

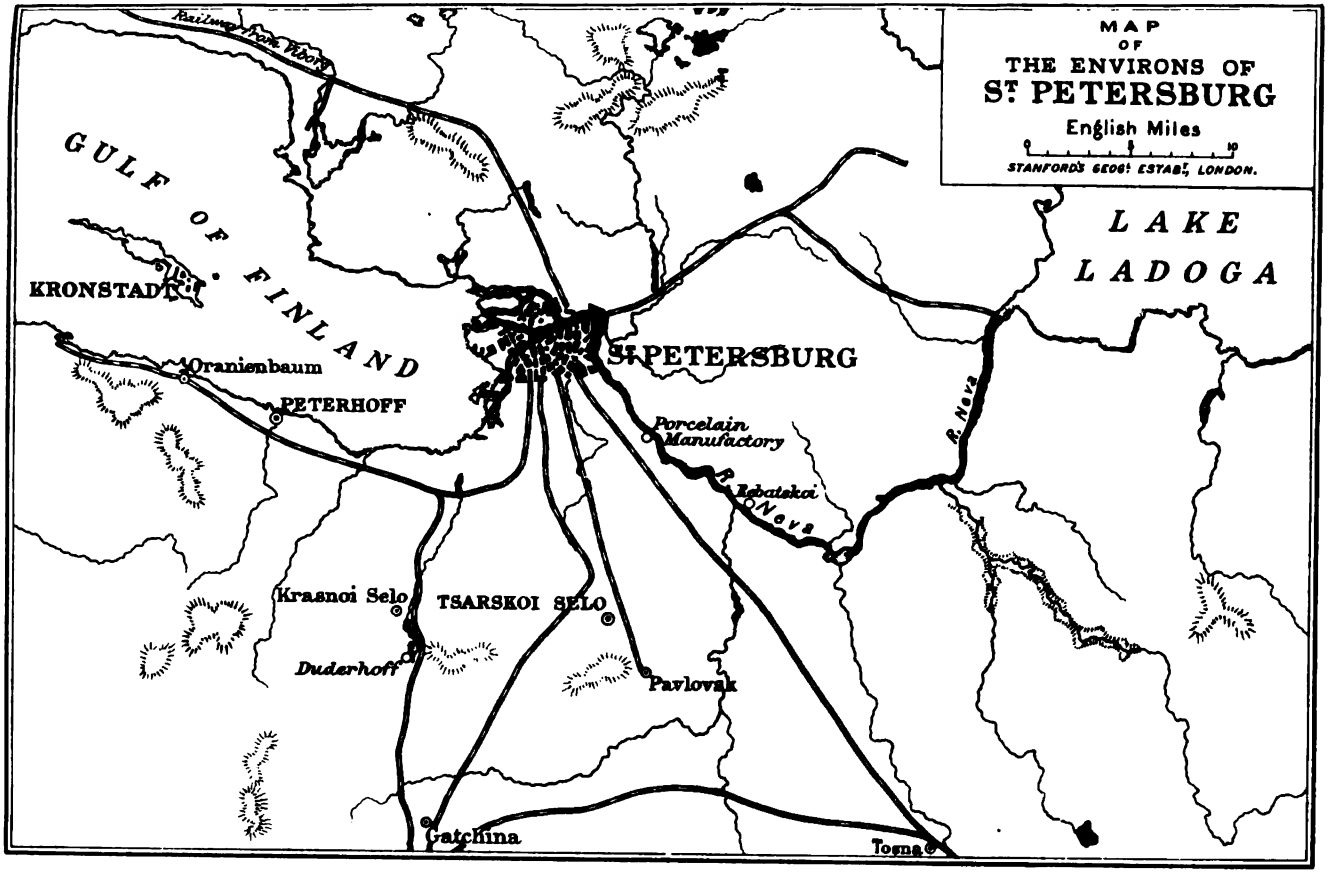
[*To face page* 15.

a purse full of gold. He stopped for a moment, then seized the purse and walked off. He had not gone many yards when the ladies saw a poor man come up to him begging. Without a moment's hesitation Father Johann drew the purse out of his pocket and gave it him. Money is nothing to Father Johann; he takes what each chooses to give and hands it to the first who asks.

To write a short chapter on one of the largest capitals of Europe is no easy matter. It has been my chief aim to leave out what has been said many times, and to say a few things that have not been said before. Very little has been written about the English colony at St. Petersburg. They are, in the main, the descendants or successors of the English merchants who settled in Archangel in the reign of Philip and Mary, soon after Sir Hugh Willoughby had discovered Archangel. "The English Factory," as they were called, removed to St. Petersburg soon after its foundation by Peter the Great. I have not myself visited Archangel, but a friend who was there in 1902 tells me that there is still a fine English church there, outside the town of Archangel proper, across the river Maimax at Solonbal. Most of the loading places for steamers are round about Solonbal, and the church in question was built there for the convenience of English seamen. Some ten to fifteen years ago a great number of steamers bearing the British flag loaded at Archangel, but latterly the steamers of other countries have had the larger portion of the business. Consequently, the church, which used to be well attended, is now far too large for the requirements of the place. It is built of wood, and has seats for upwards of five hundred people, a speaking relic of more prosperous times. The chaplain's house in the chief street of Archangel contains a library of valuable books. In these days there is only a chaplain there in summer. When the English Factory left Archangel that town began to sink rapidly in importance, but since it has been connected by rail with Moscow it has begun to look up again. For years past the English colony, once so flourishing in St. Petersburg, has been steadily

melting away. It is the story of the Hanseatic League in England over again. The Russians have gradually learned to do for themselves what they were once obliged to employ the English to do for them, and the latter have gradually sought a fortune elsewhere. "The English form a colony apart," wrote Kohl in 1842, "yet more than the Germans, who have many Russian subjects among their body, while the former remain always the foreign guests who in time of peace share the privileges of the natives without partaking of their burdens. They call their body 'The St. Petersburg Factory.' They have their own church, and live secluded among themselves, despising all other nations, and more particularly their hosts, the Russians; they drive English equipages, hunt the bear on the shores of the Neva, as they do the tiger on those of the Ganges; they decline taking their hats off to the Emperor, and looking down on all men, boast of their own indispensableness and their invincible fleets." Yet it was France that had the greater influence over Russia in the early days of St. Petersburg. "*Tout ce qui venait de Paris et de Versailles était pris pour modèle; on jouait, on se battait en duel comme à Paris.*"* The luxury of Versailles was copied and overdone. Potëmkin passed round for dessert, at a dinner, when he was travelling with Catherine II. to the Crimea, a dish full of pearls; each guest helped himself with a spoon. The luxury came to its zenith under Paul I. A French architect—Leblond—built Peterhoff: Falconet designed the monument of Peter the Great; Montferand was the architect of St. Isaac's and French artists executed its magnificent reliefs. A Frenchman, at the bidding of Alexander I., introduced the textile industry into Warsaw. Frenchmen from Alsace and Lyons established silk and cotton centres at Moscow. The railway between St. Petersburg and Moscow was constructed by French engineers, and worked by a French company for

* See Louis Guitton's interesting pamphlet on this subject (1894). That writer states that French influence did not penetrate into Russia until the middle of the eighteenth century, that is, during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great. I need hardly add that duelling has long been done away with in Russia though it is still popular in Germany.



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the first few years. But, alas! there are directions in which French influence has been far less satisfactory. The young men and women imported into Russia from France as tutors and governesses were not the cream of their country, but rather the scum:* they had an evil influence on the morals of the young entrusted to their care, and introduced a taste, which still predominates, for a class of French literature that few English fathers would care to see in the home. There have never been many French professors in Russian universities because there has always been a dread, on the side of the Russians, of Catholic influences; when they can get Swiss Lutherans they prefer it, for they have very little fear of Protestant influence. No one who knows Russia well could ever dream of the Catholic and Greek Churches uniting. Never would the Russians submit themselves to a foreign pontiff. "*Le principe qui admet le pape comme chef visible de l'Eglise, comme vicaire du Christ, est antipathique aux sentiments du peuple russe*," wrote N. Turguenieff, in 1847, and he went on to say that the fate of Italy alone would be a sufficient warning—of Italy so beautiful and so unfortunate! Those Russians one meets with who are of French origin are almost invariably the children of French *émigrés*, who sought refuge in Russia during the French Revolution. Such families have always been treated with exceptional favour in the land of their adoption; they are now more Russian than French.

With German influence it has been otherwise. There have always been Germans in Russia since the earliest time; one reason for this is the contiguity of Germany. Karamsin tells us that in the Middle Ages the doctors and chemists at the Court of Moscow as well as the men who formed the bodyguard of the Grand Prince were Germans. The chemist who blew up the walls of Kazan

* "French tutors and governesses have done the greatest injury to Russia. . . It was not Peter the Great whose ideas gave a false direction to Russia; the French tendencies introduced at a later period caused the mischief, and it will not be right again till they are rooted out." Haxthausen's "Russia," pub. 1851.

for Ivan the Terrible was a German. Many of the commonest articles in daily use have German names, and have never had Russian ones. The whole Russian army is in all its ranks designated by German titles which are "*vides de sens et choquantes pour l'oreille russe.*" "*Le paysan russe,*" says Guitton, "*qui a parfois des mots très fines, disait, que tout allemand possède au bas de l'échine un crochet servant toujours à entrainer quelque autre allemand à la suite.*"

CHAPTER II.

THE CZAR'S GERMAN SUBJECTS.

Four Classes of Germans—Nobility—Intellectuals—Commercial—Colonists—Catherine II. offers land—First arrivals—Saratoff—Sarepta—Hussites—Acclimatisation of mustard—Favourable position of German colonists—Interesting statistics—Lutheran pastors—Colonists compared to peas—Germans in the government of Novgorod—Style of architecture—Rapid increase—Intermarriage—Wealthy colonists in Central Russia—Domestic life—Teaching Russians how to work—Old German customs retained—Roman Catholics—Interiors—Language—Anecdotes illustrating German methods.

On the occasion of my first visit to Russia it was pleasant to find that though I knew no Russian I could converse with people in every class of society except the largest—that of the peasants—through the medium of the German language. No matter whether I journeyed between St. Petersburg and Vladivostok, or between Moscow and Tashkent, I found Germans in every town, at every railway station of any size, and in almost every train.

The Germans of Russia may be roughly divided into four classes—the nobility, the intellectuals, the tradespeople and the colonists.

The nobility, who hail mostly from the Baltic provinces, are less distinguished perhaps by sharpness of intellect than by pride in their descent from the good old families of Esthonia, Courland, and Livonia. Trustworthily and honourably fulfilling the duties assigned to them in high civil and military appointments, many of them are of great value to the State and hard to replace, as was clearly seen during the Russo-Japanese War. Being of the Lutheran faith, they and their families attend the Lutheran church

and support their respective pastors not a little by their presence in the pew on Sundays, and by their manifest sympathy with the labours of these good men for the welfare of their flocks. English readers will doubtless be surprised to learn that there are governors of provinces in Russia whose religion differs only in a few trifling particulars from that of the Presbyterians in our own country.

The intellectuals are those who earn their livelihood by the work of their brains, such as lawyers, literary men, architects, professors and pastors. There is not a town of any importance without its quota of this indispensable class, not a school of learning without its German professors, not a province without its Lutheran pastor. Take, for instance, the town of Yaroslav, which boasts of possessing more millionaire tradesmen than any other town in Russia; all its best posts of the intellectual kind are filled to-day, without one exception, by Germans. The Director of the Lyceum of Jurisprudence is a German, the government architect, the government engineer, the comptroller, the chief exciseman, and so on. Slavs and Germans work amicably side by side. If you ask the Slav what he thinks of the German he will tell you that the latter is both clever and shrewd, but rather inclined to be prejudiced. The German, in his turn, will tell you that he and the Slav get on very well together, but that he would not change places with the Slav for anything in the world.

The tradespeople form a class which includes wholesale as well as retail merchants,* also some thousands of resident agents with their clerks, who, representing the merchant princes of Moscow and St. Petersburg, are spread like a great network from one end of this vast empire to the other. Many of these agents receive handsome salaries, and live in quite a luxurious style. Those whose lot has fallen in such a climate as Kokand or Merv are their own masters during the five or six hot months of each year, and usually spend that time in travelling in Europe, or visiting their relatives in Russia. One of these gentlemen,

*I use the word "merchant" here rather in the Continental sense.

while spending a holiday in Germany, was fortunate in making the acquaintance at Prague of an exceptionally attractive young lady and in persuading her to marry him on the fourth day of their courtship. The wedding over, they started at once for the bridegroom's distant home in Central Asia, and when I had the pleasure of being their guest in Kokand, some years later, it was evident to all eyes that their marriage had been "made in heaven," as the saying goes. "The only question between us," the wife told me with a smile, "is whether to spend next summer in a tour to England, where we have relatives, or to content ourselves with a shorter trip—say, to the Caucasus—and bring home a grand piano bought with the money thus economised. I am in favour of the piano, but my husband thinks we ought to see London."

The German-speaking commercial travellers form a still more numerous body, and one is constantly thrown in contact with them at the railway buffets and in the trains. Many an interesting chat have I had with these shrewdly observant itinerants in the wide sociable corridors of the Russian and Siberian *trains de luxe*. The absence of a University training does not always prove a disadvantage. A good all-round schooling till the age of seventeen, followed by a close grapple with the present everyday world, often turns out minds fresher and more independent than are the bulk of those who have had the advantage of being sharpened for the usual number of years on the grindstone of learning.

The German-speaking Lutheran colonists engaged in agriculture have now to be dealt with; they form the largest class of all the Germans in Russia.

Most of us are aware that Catherine II. was a German Princess, and that it was she who founded the first German colonies in Russia. She did this in a reasonable hope that, by their industry and good example, they would improve the land, and communicate to the Russian serfs their more advanced ideas of agriculture. Great inducements, such as the offer of free land, brought over thousands of German

peasants, the first batches of whom settled in the neighbourhood of Saratoff on the Volga. Following the course of the Volga on the map we find, half way between Saratoff and Astrakhan, a town bearing the biblical name of Sarepta. Here it was that a colony of Hussites (Herrnhuters) was founded in the year 1770. Among the inducements offered to the colonists were: freedom from all taxation for a period of thirty years, freedom of trade, the right to govern themselves by a tribunal of their own choosing, and the permission to distil spirituous liquor. In order that they might be protected from the raids of brigands and nomads, their settlements were surrounded by a low rampart, with six bastions and a moat. Thanks to the enjoyment of these privileges, the colony throve and flourished till it became what it now is—one of the richest and finest of all the colonies on the Volga. Nestling among its trees and pastures it presents a pleasing picture to the eye, with its paved streets, its sidewalks lined with poplars, and its reservoirs of pure sparkling water. It seems to the traveller like a refreshing oasis amid the lonely wastes that form the Volga's bank for many a mile above it and below.

Sarepta suffered through the rebellion of Pugatcheff in 1774. The rebels entered the colony after their unsuccessful attempt to take Tsaritzin—a town twenty-five miles distant—by siege. It was near Sarepta that Pugatcheff hanged the astronomer Lovitz, whom he met on the steppe with his pupils. "I will give him the means of coming in closer contact with the stars," he explained to the professor's horror-struck pupils.

The colony is especially noted for its weaving industry. Several of the original settlers had brought with them from Germany the hand-looms they had used in the old home. These they employed for weaving silk handkerchiefs of sombre hue which their women wore in the place of hats. Such handkerchiefs found a ready sale among the neighbouring sect of *Raskolniks*, (dissenters from the Orthodox church), who avoid all machine-made articles of apparel as unclean. Later on, cotton handkerchiefs

took the place of silk ones and the industry spread throughout all the German colonies in that part of Russia.*

Towards the close of the eighteenth century a society, organised by the government, made a successful attempt to acclimatise the mustard plant in this vicinity. The colonists themselves invented and manufactured hand machines for extracting mustard and oil from the seed. In 1810 a rich manufacturer introduced the pressure of the seed by means of horse-power, and finally erected a steam factory. Among other occupations of the colonists at Sarepta are, gardening, the making of ginger-bread—called in Germany *Pfeffer Kuchen*—the baking of clay utensils for household use, and the stuffing of various kinds of birds. Sarepta has more than six thousand inhabitants of the Lutheran faith. It possesses schools, a hospital, several charitable institutions, and post and telegraph offices. Many of the well-to-do Russians of Tsaritzin have their summer villas at Sarepta, and at one time it was much frequented by invalids on account of a mineral spring with medicinal properties, which was discovered during the reign of Catherine II., and bears her name. Similar springs having since been discovered in the Caucasus, invalids have preferred these to Sarepta, which is not surprising, as the mountain scenery of the Caucasus is among the finest in the world.

The position of the colonist was from the first a far more favourable one in every way than that of his neighbour, the Russian serf; and now, nearly half a century after the emancipation of the serfs, the German's lot is still cast in pleasanter places. In the year 1847 there were, according to published statistics, no less than eighty-four thousand foreign colonists in Russia. In the year 1904 there were sixty thousand Germans in the government of St. Petersburg alone. The Lutheran pastor at Novgorod has forty-five separate flocks, and, though several of these are Esthonians, and several Livonians, one may say that they are nearly all German. In the

* See the statistics published by M. Semenoff in 1901.

government of Kursk there are only six hundred Germans, while the government of Kharkoff has upwards of five thousand. The town of Kieff contains upwards of four thousand, and in Saratoff and its neighbourhood there are more than four hundred thousand German colonists. I took down these figures from the lips of the pastors themselves; they will help the reader to judge of the approximate spread of Lutherans in Russia, and he will not say, as a Danish lawyer, priding himself on his knowledge of Russia, said to me since my return: "I thought the only Lutherans in the Empire were those of Finland."

"The German colonists are like peas," said one of the pastors, "they always roll together." Their intelligence being more developed than that of the Russian peasant, they set about their work in a more scientific manner. Carefully choosing plots of land from what has hitherto been unreclaimed marsh they soon find themselves the happy possessors of flourishing farmsteads. The Russian peasants are not sufficiently advanced to cope with their difficulties, consequently they are quickly outstripped by the Germans. In the government of Novgorod these enjoy a monopoly in the preparation of table butter for the whole country round; no one will eat Russian-made butter in that part of the world if he can possibly avoid it. The Germans of Novgorod also cultivate bees, and their honey is in as good repute as their butter.

There is one reliable outward sign by which the eye of the traveller can at once distinguish the home of a German colonist from that of a Russian peasant. The colonist always builds his cottage on a level with the ground. If you can walk in at the door without the aid of steps you may be sure that you are crossing the threshold of a colonist's home. The Russian invariably builds in such a way that three or four steps must be ascended before the door is reached; from the earliest times, when Russia was one great marsh, the Russian has built his dwelling-house above a cellar, and entered it by means of steps. The old habit is so engrained that if a Russian peasant

were to build his house upon a mountain or a rock, there would still be steps up to his front door.

The population of German colonists is increasing, in proportion, more rapidly than that of the Russians themselves. The colonists have larger families—a family of ten children being a small one with them. They rarely, if ever, intermarry with the Russians. With the Germans in the large towns it is different; there, they mingle freely with their Russian neighbours, and mixed marriages are consequently becoming more and more frequent. The middle or upper class Russian knows well that if he secures a German for his wife she will look well to the ways of her household. Does it not lie in the blood of a German woman to be a practical housewife, and a devoted, unselfish mother? Many a time I have heard the banns read out in some Lutheran church in St. Petersburg, and many a time have I noticed that the bridegroom's name was unmistakably Russian, while that of the bride was Teutonic. But to return to the colonists; as these multiply, so they spread, there being nothing patriarchal in their family arrangements. Younger descendants of the early colonists at Sarepta and the lower Volga, leaving the old home with money in their pockets, start off in small bands in search of available land. After picking and choosing carefully—a thing the wandering Russian can rarely afford to do, seeing that beggars cannot be choosers—they settle down and start new homes of their own. Since the year 1884, seven now large and flourishing colonies have been started in this way in the government of Kharkoff, every one of whose pioneers came from the lower Volga, as I have already said, with money in his pocket. But it is not only money that the German brings to his new home. In his heart there is a proud consciousness that he is a peasant. The word "*Bauer*" has music in it for him, and though he often possesses two or even three thousand head of cattle, his wife and daughters are not above doing all the household work between them. The daughters who are not thus occupied go out to work in the fields. The thriving colonist

constantly employs Russian peasants to do the less important work on his farm, or rather the work that requires the least thought, but those members of the Russian proletariat who are most in need of work are often in such a pitiable state of want and in so famished a condition when they first present themselves for employment, that it has become almost a rule amongst the colonists to let the new employee stay in the house to rest and sleep for three whole days before he is put to work. Then they go with him and show him carefully how he is expected to accomplish the task before him. He is grateful for such considerate treatment, satisfied with his pay, and quite willing to stay with his kind, though strict masters as long as they will keep him.

Each colonist in Central Russia has a comfortable dwelling-house with fruit garden and vegetable garden attached, and sheds for his cattle close by. The master constantly rises from his bed two and three times during the night to go and see with his own eyes that his cattle are all right. In this particular he never trusts a servant. His horse recognises his footstep and loves him. All the animals are well fed, and in excellent condition. In such a household it is interesting to note that many of the essentially German customs, which, brought over to Russia by the earliest settlers in the time of Catherine II., are still rigorously preserved. Were I not striving to write impartially, I should feel inclined to add, that one at least of these customs might with advantage have been allowed to drop. For instance, the colonist being of a hospitable turn of mind is glad to receive and entertain guests, and his wife will cook for her visitors the best of dinners, but,—she and her daughters would never dream of sitting down to eat until her husband and the guests had quite finished their repast.

Each colony has its own elementary school which, though subject to regular inspection by the government inspectors, has its own teacher—a German of the Lutheran faith. This village schoolmaster has also certain parochial duties of which I shall speak later. From the pastors I learned

that there is very little drinking among the colonists, and that they are remarkable for the industrious and respectable lives they lead.

What of their example on their Russian neighbours? is a question the reader will ask. The Russian peasant learns many useful things from them. Of late he has taken to copying the shape of the German cart, because it has dawned upon him that the latter is far more commodious than his own. He also gets occasional hints through seeing the German methods of agriculture, and noting successful results.

Besides the colonists who came over from Westphalia, Bavaria, Saxony, and Swabia, there came many from German Switzerland and many from Alsace and Loraine. These, altogether, formed one hundred and ninety separate colonies on the Volga. It is curious that while the colonists in the government of Saratoff have given Russian names to their settlements, those in the government of Samara have, like the Americans, retained the names of the Swiss towns from which they severally emigrated, such as Shaffhausen,* Lucerne, and Unterwald. Catherine II.'s first manifesto regarding the colonists was published in December, 1762; this was followed by a second on July 22nd, 1763. European peasants, irrespective of nationality, received an open invitation. Jews alone were excluded, and this, probably, because no European Jews had ever proved themselves particularly successful as agriculturalists, and it was to improve the land that Catherine wanted the aid of foreign peasants. Thirty *desatines* of land were allotted to each family. Considering their diligence, added to the many privileges which they have enjoyed, it is hardly surprising to find them more prosperous than their heavily handicapped Russian neighbours.

So far, besides the Hussites, I have touched only upon

* Haxthausen visited Shaffhausen in 1850. "This fragment of Germany on the banks of the Volga," says that writer, "produces a curious impression upon the mind; it is not an isolated, languishing colony, but a flourishing country with more than 100,000 inhabitants, all exhibiting a completely German physiognomy."

the Lutheran faith in connection with the colonists, but I should add that among them are also to be found, though a comparatively small proportion, colonists of the Roman Catholic persuasion. In Saratoff there is a seminary for the training of Roman Catholic priests. There are also colonists who are called *Stundists*, though the last-named sect is by some students considered to be composed mainly of the Russian converts to the Lutheran faith, who have borrowed from the Lutheran colonists the word "*Stunde*," which is used by the latter to denote a religious service. I have frequently heard the German pastors in Russia use it in this sense.

The dwellings of German colonists differ more in their interior from those of their Russian neighbours than they do in their exterior. Firstly, where there is a German housewife there is cleanliness. The floors are carefully swept and sprinkled with fresh sand. Here one does not find that huge stove which in the house of the Russian peasant takes up one-fourth of the living room. In its place is a smaller stove, and the extra space is filled with pieces of furniture, such as cupboards, tables, boxes, and even footstools. In the best bedroom stands a great double bedstead with a canopy, and a real German feather bed*—an article unknown in Russian houses, and quite superfluous in the heated atmosphere resulting from the use of a Russian stove.

The German colonies have been compared to a kingdom within a kingdom, a world apart from, yet surrounded by and sharply contrasting with, a larger world, from which it differs in religion, in speech, in type of feature, in character and in dress. A large proportion of their families cannot speak a word of Russian and have not the least desire to learn it, consequently they have neither sympathy nor intercourse with the Russians. I am glad to say they

* Mathew Guthrie, writing in 1802, described an illustrated German Bible which he had seen in St. Petersburg. One illustration showed "a man rolling up an enormous feather bed, as if the cure was not sufficiently miraculous without this *tour de force!*"

are not an increasing proportion. Surely the German colonies, taken as a whole, are a leaven which must have its effect in time.*

Here is an amusing and at the same time a true story which illustrates the difference that exists between the mind of a Russian peasant and that of a German colonist. There came recently a swarm of cockchafers upon a certain district in Central Russia; they threatened to destroy the young corn in the fields of a colonist and in those of a Russian peasant adjoining. The colonist sent promptly to the nearest town for a long rope; this he stretched across his field, tying the respective ends to two horses. As the horses moved forward, the rope, extended between them, was drawn over the young blades of corn, and disturbed the cockchafers so much that they soon departed in a body to the adjoining field of the Russian peasant. The peasant did not dream of adopting the plan of his practical neighbour, but sent for a priest to sprinkle the field with holy-water. The result was anything but satisfactory.

"It is ¡scandalous!" cried a German shopkeeper in Kharkoff, as he handed me some articles I had been purchasing. "What do you think the Russian peasants do with the manure from their cattle sheds? *They cart it into the river!* It never enters their heads to use it for their fields as the colonists do. Why, the soil round here is so rich, that if they only worked it properly, they would choke with their own wealth."

* "The Germans are the first that ever attempte any systematic measures for counteracting the ravages of the locusts. The Germans have been the great extirpators of the snakes by which the country was formerly infested to a fearful extent. When there is famine in the country it is always to the Germans that the impoverished Russians look for the means of subsistence." Haxthausen, 1851.

CHAPTER III.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN RUSSIA.

Religious freedom—Government—Consistories—Polish consistory—Finland has its own archbishop—Baptists and Mennonites—A pastor's circuit—Charitable organisations—Voluntary collections—Pastor's duties—The Evangelical Hospital at St. Petersburg—Other institutions—Lutheran colonists—Pastor's periodical visits—Anecdote of delayed funeral—Lutheran professors—Steppe circuits—Roman Catholics at Kursk—The Castle of Marino—Architecture of Lutheran churches—The Lutheran church at Kisheneff—A vine-clad parsonage.

It will have been clearly seen from the preceding chapter that the Czar's subjects belonging to the Lutheran faith may be counted by hundreds of thousands. But for two serious restrictions they would be enjoying to-day as much religious freedom as do the Presbyterians of Great Britain and America, whose tenets so closely resemble theirs—they are forbidden to proselytise, and if a member of the Lutheran church marries a member of the Orthodox church—as the national church of Russia is called—his or her children must be brought up in the Orthodox faith. The result is that, although upwards of fifty per cent. of the inhabitants of St. Petersburg are of German origin, more than half of these belong to the Greek church. In all the larger towns mixed marriages are becoming more and more frequent, especially among citizens belonging to the middle class.

The tenets held by one section of the Protestant population, especially in Poland, are similar to those of the Reformed or Calvinistic churches in Germany and Switzerland; they have a place of worship in St. Petersburg on the Moïka. The French and Dutch churches in St.

Petersburg belong to the Reformed church. The tenets of another section resemble those of the Baptists in England. There are also a number of colonists who belong to the Memnonite sect, a sect whose conscience will not allow them to enter military service, except in one capacity, that of a hospital nurse; they are against all shedding of blood. The Memnonites have distinguished themselves as agriculturalists, especially in Southern Russia.

The Lutheran church in Russia is a religious body quite distinct from the denominations bearing the same name in Germany and in Sweden; it is an independent church, and governs itself. To this church belong most of the Germans in Russia, and all the Finns, all the Esthonians—except a small section to whom a separate chapter will be devoted—and all the Livonians. Taken together they make an aggregate of six million souls. The government of the Lutheran church is vested in a General Consistory, among the members of which are representatives of all the Protestant denominations in Russia, except the Baptists. At its head is a bishop. The present head is Bishop Conrad Freifeldt. Under the direction of the General Consistory there are grouped five provincial consistories. The St. Petersburg consistory, the general superintendent of which is Pastor Pingoud, stretches from Archangel to Odessa, and from Moscow to the Polish frontier. The Moscow consistory includes the whole of Siberia, and all Russia between Moscow and the Urals. The Esthonian consistory includes the whole of Esthonia; the Livonian consistory includes the whole of Livonia, and the Courland consistory the whole of Courland. The last three, though covering far less territory, are quite as important as those of St. Petersburg and Moscow, the bulk of the population of the Baltic provinces being Lutheran. Poland has a consistory of its own. In Warsaw the Lutherans, in deference to the feelings of the Roman Catholics, have adopted the title of "Evangelical Christians." Their tenets are based on those contained in the declaration of Augsburg, which Melancthon handed to Charles V. The Grand Duchy of

Finland has its own archbishop, who again has three bishops under him. The archbishop has his seat at Obo. The management of this church is carried on upon the same lines as that of the Lutheran church in Sweden.

The Baptists and Memnonites, having no connection with the above consistories, fall under the supervision of the Russian police, and have really no place in this chapter.

The members of the consistories are called *Pröpste*. Under the direction of each *Propst* are a group of pastors who meet together once a year to discuss church matters. A pastor's circuit is called a *Sprengel*, and a meeting together of pastors is called a *Sprengel's Synod*. It is always presided over by a *Propst*. Once a year there is held at St. Petersburg a general meeting of all the *Pröpste* from all the consistories. The provincial synods arrange their own times for meeting, there being no fixed date on which they are expected to assemble.

The charitable organisations belonging to the Lutheran church are many. There is the "Evangelical Lutheran's Relief Fund," under the auspices of Bishop Ulman; voluntary collections are made on behalf of this fund, and large sums of money have from time to time been contributed to it with the understanding that only the interest shall be touched. Part of the interest is employed in the erection of churches and schools, the remainder is devoted to the travelling expenses of the various pastors. More than a hundred thousand roubles—in English money ten thousand pounds—are expended annually from this fund. I may remark here that the travelling expenses of a Lutheran pastor in Russia are a larger item than might at first be supposed, on account of the immense distances to be continually traversed. One pastor told me that he had a circuit larger than France; he spends more than three months of each year in travelling. Another pastor of my acquaintance, who has more than forty flocks to visit, has no less ground to travel over. Sometimes they travel for days together in a tarantass, over execrable roads, sometimes on horseback and sometimes on the comfortable

river steamers. After being long and cruelly jolted in a tarantass, and covered with mud or dust, they find the change to a steamer a most agreeable relief. They are bright, capable-looking men, and I never met one who did not enjoy that healthy outdoor life, the nearest approach to which is the life our Episcopalian curates have sometimes led in the bush of Australia.*

Among the charitable institutions of the Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg may be noticed the "*Alexander Stift*," or maternity hospital, a model of its kind, with an excellent staff, and well-trained nurses.

The *Evangelical Hospital* is also for women. Patients of all classes are admitted, and paying patients can have comfortable private rooms. After visiting every department of this institution I left it with the conviction that it, too, was a model of its kind, and that we had nothing in our own country to surpass it. In the building there is a pretty Lutheran chapel which has its own pastor. The bright and kindly faces of the lady nurses in their trim white costume rise before me as I write, and I am glad to be able to add that more than one English governess, taken ill at her post in some Russian family, has had cause to be thankful that such an institution exists in far-away Russia. The kind reception, the sympathetic and skilful nursing, and the personal interest extended by the good matron to every patient received under her roof, have cheered the heart of many a stranger in a foreign land. Some of the nurses are Christian Jewesses.

Other institutions are the *Evangelical Poor House*, the *Home for Incurables*, the *Town Mission*, *The Young Men's Association* (for Germans and Esthonians), equivalent to our Y.M.C.A., and the *Gesellen Herberg* for artisans.

For many years past there has been a good work going on among the poor Jews of St. Petersburg. Certain charitably-inclined ladies of the German Lutheran community have maintained at their own expense a small home for orphan girls of the Jewish race. The children

* See Mrs. Ada Cambridge.

are fed, clothed, and educated, and then every effort is made to start them comfortably in life. Some become domestic servants, others hospital nurses, and others again, dressmakers. Much as the Jewish character has been abused, there is no race that exhibits more gratitude for real kindness. Many of the girls from this home have done very well for themselves, but they have never forgotten their kind benefactresses. I wrote down, from the lips of a lady who is on the committee, the story of one girl who, after doing well as a dressmaker, married a prosperous tradesman; it was her first thought after the wedding to return to the orphanage to see if she could render it any assistance. The story of this girl was so pleasing that I am sorry I have mislaid my note-book and cannot give it more fully. No compulsion is used in religious matters, but the New Testament is read to the girls as well as the Old; it being the earnest wish of the ladies that the orphans may be led to embrace the Christian faith.

Now a word about the German colonies. As their pastors can only pay them periodical visits, seldom oftener than twice a year, the village schoolmasters are appointed to read burial services, and perform certain other offices that a pastor would himself perform if present. Weddings, and the administration of the Sacrament, can, of course, only be performed by an ordained pastor. From the above it will be rightly inferred that the village schoolmaster is a man of some importance among the colonists, and where he is at hand such a case as the following could hardly occur. A lady in Finland heard that a Lutheran in the neighbouring village had died, and, feeling sorry for the bereaved family, showed them some kindness. A few days later, meeting one of the daughters, she enquired if the funeral had taken place, and received a reply in the negative. Several more days had passed, when again meeting the girl she once more asked about the funeral. "Oh," replied the latter, "father's not buried yet, and I don't know when he will be, though it's nine days since he died. Pastor H—— is so busy with the confirmation classes."

The seven well-to-do colonies in the government of Kharkoff are under the care of Pastor Berg, a very capable man, who resides in the town of Kharkoff, and has one assistant under him. He has also a flock in the town itself numbering three thousand souls. Several of the university professors in Kharkoff are Germans, among whom may be mentioned Professor Struve, son of the celebrated astronomer of that name now residing at Carlsruhe, who made his name in Russia; also Professor Brandt, the zoologist.

Pastor Mohrfeldt, in the government of Novgorod, has a circuit stretching for nine hundred versts from north to south, and three hundred versts from east to west. He has one assistant—a Livonian, who ministers to the spiritual wants of the Livonian colonists dwelling within the Novgorod circuit.

Many a pastor lives out in the country amongst the colonies and far from the nearest town. All of those I have mentioned by name have lived for years in such steppe circuits. There is a circuit in the north of the Crimean peninsula which includes within its southern boundary the Lutheran church in the town of Sebastopol, where there are perhaps fewer Germans than in any other town of its importance in Russia. An army doctor, and two or three families of the artisan class, compose the entire congregation. The pastor only comes to Sebastopol four times during the year, but a service is, nevertheless, held there every Sunday, the beadle conducting it in the pastor's absence. In the government of Kursk, in Central Russia, there are more Roman Catholics than Lutherans; the former have a large handsome church in the town of Kursk. It is an interesting fact that if a Lutheran marries a Roman Catholic the children are brought up, almost without exception, in the Lutheran faith. About a hundred versts from the town of Kursk, near the village of Ivanovskoff, lies the estate of Prince Baryatinsky, the Castle of Marino. Attached to the castle is a little Lutheran chapel, built by the grandmother of the present Prince Baryatinsky, who

was by birth a Countess Keller, of the same family as the Count Keller who fell in the early part of the Russo-Japanese war. Though Prince Baryatinsky and his family are members of the Orthodox church, he never lets a year pass without having a Lutheran service performed in that little chapel. The Lutheran pastor at Kursk is his guest on those occasions.

The Lutheran churches of St. Petersburg and Moscow may be described as handsome edifices, but those of the other towns are mostly plain structures of red brick, with little claim to architectural beauty. The church of Tver is perhaps the finest of this class; its painted glass windows behind the altar have a pleasing effect. In almost every case the pastor lives in a parsonage, built in the immediate vicinity of the church, and enclosed by the same wall. The prettiest, the most picturesque, and one of the oldest Lutheran churches in Russia, is that of the town of Kisheneff. Built of white stone, with a graceful bell tower, it carries one's thoughts to Italy. It has a long nave and a low roof; its walls are entirely covered with vines. At the time of my visit, towards the end of October, the vine leaves had taken their autumn tints of gold and brown and red. The vine-clad parsonage nestled close to the church, and the pastor's wife had only to stretch her hand out of the window to pluck a bunch of luscious black grapes. The pastor took us inside the church to see a large oil painting of some note which stands behind the altar; the subject is "Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane." We lingered some time before it, being attracted by the beautiful Christ face, evidently taken from life, the model—a young Russian peasant. The thought of that face brings to my mind a remark made by the Marquis de Custine: "The Russian men have the faces of angels;" it was of the peasant class that he was speaking. As we drove back to our hotel the last we saw of that pretty little church was its graceful campanile, towering among the surrounding trees, and gleaming white above them in the clear soft light of the full Bessarabian moon.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEASANTS OF GREAT RUSSIA.

The patriarchal family—Each government its own costume—The real *moujik*—Influence of large towns—The isba—Chimneys—Straw roofs—Carved woodwork—Stoves—Vapour baths—Bathing in a bread oven—Gardens—Interiors—Whitewash—Love of bright colours—Lace curtains—Description of a home—Pure air—Russian and English poor compared—Domestic animals—Strange cradles—Length of an isba's life—Destruction of villages by fire—Sturdy womanhood—Marriage—Old customs—The land question—Why the Russians are lazy—An elegant drink—Love of music—Flax—The peasant mother—Western ways—Peasant girls and rouge.

THE patriarchal family is now a thing of the past. It died out long ago in Little Russia, and in Great Russia it exists to-day only in the governments to the north of St. Petersburg. This is in itself a hopeful sign, for it shows that the younger generation is growing up with a more independent spirit. The peasants have a proverb, "The son marries to-day, and is gone to-morrow." The brides refuse point-blank to settle down in the same village as their husband's parents; they prefer to go to a safe distance and start the new home quite independently. In the old days, before the railways, every government had its own customs, and its own national costumes. In the Ethnographical Museum at Moscow we found twenty-nine couples, life-size—wax figures in glass cases, dressed in the costumes of as many governments. The women's gowns are very pretty, also their high head-dresses. Our modern dress-designers might get many a hint for a graceful sleeve from these costumes, so carefully preserved. As in England so in Russia, the days of quick travelling and easy com-

munication are rapidly levelling all the old differences between one part of the country and another. The north, between St. Petersburg and Archangel, is perhaps the part which has seen the fewest changes; yet there too the old traditions and customs are fast disappearing. In the year 1886 the Imperial Geographical Society deputed two of its members, a father and son, to collect all that still remained at that date. These gentlemen, after several years of patient research, presented to the society a collection of eighty thousand legends, and read many of them at a public meeting held at St. Petersburg in the year 1892. Some of the older legends date back to the time of the Kieff princes.

The further a village is from the towns, the simpler the life of its inhabitants. The peasants of the north are, many of them, the descendants of the tribes of Finnish origin,* who inhabited the land round St. Petersburg before it became Russian. Moscow is the central point, the heart, so to speak, of Great Russia, and the people gravitate towards that city, as, in our country, they do to London. But we cannot find the real *moujik* in the vicinity of cities and towns, nor can we find him in the suburbs dotted with villas, where the townspeople spend the summer months. We must go right out into the country, where there are neither the virtues nor the vices of civilisation. In the neighbourhood of Moscow no girl thinks now of weaving her own dresses; she is content to purchase cheap, inferior goods, whose colours are not fast, and it is the ambition of her life to marry a "clean dressed man from Moscow."

The isba, or wooden cottage of the Great Russian peasant, is built usually of timber, with two or three windows all in a row, facing the village street, and a pointed roof. A generation back a chimney was an innovation hardly thought of, but now almost every isba is provided with one. The peasants were very slow to understand that an outlet for the smoke from the stove could be so built as not to conduct a current of freezing winter air into the

* See following chapter.

room. The roof is of planks, in parts where these can be cheaply obtained; you never see an isba with a straw roof anywhere in the vicinity of a forest; but in those districts where trees are scarce, straw is used by all, except the wealthiest. As forest-land abounds in almost the whole of Great Russia, the plank roof is practically universal there. The outside cornices, windows, and window-shutters, are ornamented with carved woodwork, more or less profuse, according to the taste and pretensions of the owner. The interior consists of one living-room with a loft above it, and a storeroom; the living-room is about fifteen feet square, and exactly one quarter of it is filled by the huge brick or clay stove. A peasant in the government of Novgorod told me he kept a little fire in his stove all through the summer to keep the walls dry. The oven is so commodious that it is often made to do duty as a steam bath. The whole family—father, mother, and children—take what we should call a Turkish bath in it every Saturday, in those villages that are not provided with a public bath.

"Yes, that is where we bake our bread, and where we bathe," said one woman, with a pleasant smile, as she opened her oven door and let me look in. "When it is very cold we sleep on the top," pointing to the flat surface of the stove, "but in warm weather we sleep here," and she pointed to a very narrow bench made of two or three planks which ran round the sides of the room; it was narrower than the seat of a railway carriage. The storeroom at the back of the living-room is not heated by the stove; besides being a general storeroom, it is sometimes slept in in summer-time; it has no windows. Underneath the isba there is always a space—a sort of low cellar—in which milk, vegetables, and other supplies are kept. Above the living-room I have often noticed broad shelves which separate the upper part into a kind of attic; if the family is large the elder children climb up there to sleep. The isba I am now describing is, of course, that of the poor peasant. Those whom fortune has favoured build themselves larger houses with two storeys. Attached to the

isba is a yard enclosed by palings, the high-arched gate of which looks into the village street, and rejoices in much carving. In this yard there is a moss-grown cattle-shed with no windows, which contains pig-sties, etc. To enter one isba we had to grope our way through a dark, hay-strewn shed containing a lively cow, to three steps which led up to the door in its side wall, and which served also as a main entrance to the dwelling-room of the family. Although the windows look into the village street, the entrance is generally at one side, and has always three steps leading up to it. No matter how dry the soil, the Russian peasant, as I have said before, never builds his dwelling on a level with the ground. The German colonist reclaims marshy land, the Russian merely raises his house above it. In the summer and autumn of 1894, which was an exceptionally rainy year, I constantly found an isba surrounded on all sides by fields of mud a foot deep, and had to wade through it before I could reach the steps leading to the entrance. Many isbas possess a kitchen garden, and in the governments of Vladimir and Moscow they have also a fruit garden. A village in Great Russia usually consists of two lines of isbas facing each other, with a street dividing them. Each isba has its own barn or granary, which is sometimes behind it, but often on the opposite side of the road.

The interior is soon described. The walls are whitewashed, the stove is whitewashed. One ikon at least (I have counted half a dozen sometimes) hangs high in the corner to your right as you face the window, you never find that sacred picture in any other part of the room; sometimes the walls are hung with cheap prints, often with very poor portraits of the Emperor and Empress. The light is not good, as the windows are purposely made small to secure as much warmth as possible during the long winter. Each window has its neat white lace or crochet curtains and its row of flower-pots. A German pastor to whom I expressed my surprise at finding these so universal replied, "I have lived in Great Russia for seventeen years, and can assure you that in all my annual

wanderings over an immense circuit I have very seldom come across an isba that had not its clean lace curtains, and its geranium, or some such plant, in the window; the Russian feels that he must always have a little colour."

Every Saturday, before taking her bath, the wife white-washes the stove afresh. A few bold strokes and it is soon shining white and clean for Sunday. If you touch it with your fingers after it has got dry, or lean your back against it, the white does not come off. Entering, unexpectedly, one of the isbas in a very poor village in the government of Novgorod, miles away from any town, I found a samovar steaming on the table, a dirty-looking bed with nothing to serve as sheets or blankets but some filthy-looking rags, a pretty little china clock on the wall, a cradle suspended from the ceiling by a coil of iron, a fine india-rubber plant with glossy leaves flourishing in front of one window, and geraniums in front of the others. The india-rubber plant stood on a small table, covered with a spotlessly white table-cover of coarse crochet-work. The window curtains were of hand-made lace. The stove, taking up one-fourth of the room as usual, joined to a thin wooden partition with a door in it, shut off one corner of the whole, and this formed the nursery of a small child which we found crawling about on the floor. Rain was pouring down in torrents, but the stove gave out a genial heat, and, but for one drawback, I could have lingered there with pleasure; that drawback was a smell of dirt which pervaded the atmosphere. It came, without doubt, from the dirty clothes on the bed, and the garments of the inmates with whom I was conversing. It was nothing peculiar to Russia, however, for I remember that a similar odour pervaded a room in my own home for at least twelve hours after we had entertained a party of respectable Sunday-school children there not so very long ago. Every one of those children was nevertheless dressed in its best for the occasion, and spotlessly clean, to all appearances; moreover, they had come from respectable homes, not a stone's throw from Hampstead Heath, in one of the healthiest

suburbs of London. Why do not both English and Russians wash their clothes as well as their bodies?—Perhaps the answer to this question is that the poor creatures have too limited a wardrobe. With regard to the atmosphere in English houses, I may add that on one occasion when I wanted to engage a good cook, who had received testimonials from prominent people, and went myself to her very respectable home in a row of newly-built model houses, I was greeted, as she opened the door to me, with a current of such close, foul air, that I had to retreat precipitately into the front garden. Perhaps I deserved this, as I had called after church on a Sunday morning! If such can be the state of things in England, surely we need not be surprised that the Russians, whose climate is so much more severe than our own, should economise in air and washing even to a still greater degree. In winter, if they let the icy air into their isba but for a minute, they must put more wood into the stove. When a whole family and two or three animals pass the nights, and most of the days, of a six months' winter, in one room, of which the windows are hermetically sealed, the result can be better imagined than described. The calf, the lambs, the fowls, cannot bear intense cold any more than their masters; they too, must share the genial warmth given out by the giant stove. A certain amount of fresh air does, of course, enter every time the door is opened to let someone out or in, and I suppose that is what keeps the family alive. Or is it the quantity of oxygen their lungs have received during the other half of the year, when they have lived out of doors from morning till night, and slept with wide-open windows?

Cockroaches of an enormous size find a happy home between the wooden walls and the warm stove. When their numbers make them unbearable there is only one thing to be done—you must freeze them to death. The gentleman, who, with us, goes by the name of "B flat," thrives even better in the isba than he does in the London slums, where, I am told, he thinks nothing of letting himself drop gracefully from the ceiling upon the head of

the parish doctor. I know one medical man who, when on his London rounds, used regularly to turn down his hat as he placed it on the table, so that visitors might not drop into it.

In the isba above described, the coil of iron, from one end of which a cradle was suspended, was like the closely-coiled body of a snake, in eight or nine circles, each of which was about as thick as a man's little finger, and the cradle hung from it like a child's toy at the end of a piece of elastic; the slightest touch of my hand set it gently bobbing up and down like an air balloon. Such a coil is in great request wherever a new baby appears upon the scene, and the village blacksmith always keeps a store of them ready for sale; they seem to be an invention peculiar to the Russian peasant.

As a rule the peasant builds his own isba, and if not burned down, it will last him for about twenty years. Newly built, it has much the same appearance as an out-house in an English garden before it has been painted; but very soon the colour of the new wood begins to change to a dull grey—the typical grey that marks every village landscape, from the borders of Poland to the Pacific shore. After a very little practice the traveller's eye can tell at a glance the age of any particular isba. If it stands erect, with its pointed gable well poised, and its walls planted on even ground, it has certainly not seen its fifteenth birthday, and may be looked upon as "one who is about the same age as other people." If, however, there is the slightest indication of a stoop, of one wall being a little shorter than the other, you may be sure it has but a few more years to live; and that its inmates will very shortly creep out of it into a brand new one, and leave it to rot where it stands. If the owners are very poor, or very lazy, they will often remain in one half of it, even after the roofing of the other half has quite fallen in. I have been astonished many times to find the most dilapidated of isbas still inhabited. In its old age, the wood of which the isba is built begins to change from the

dull sombre shade characteristic of middle age to a pretty silver grey, which shines like satin in the sunshine. In every village of any size you find one or two such old and ruined dwellings standing side by side with the newer ones. To look at them you would think they must have stood there for a hundred years or more, if you did not know that the oldest of them all dated back no more than twenty-five years, and would very soon end its days as firewood.

If a whole village is burned down, as often happens, the government finds money for the rebuilding of the isbas; they take from four to five weeks to build. In the summer of 1904, while troops were being mobilised, and all the men of a village had gone into the neighbouring town, and the women into the fields to work, one of its isbas caught fire, and soon all the street was in a blaze. A lady living near rushed to the spot and saved thirty-seven children by her own exertions. A few decrepit old women who had been left in charge of them had also to be pulled out of the flames.

In the summer the men wear loose twill or cotton blouses, the bright colours of which are a great relief to the insipid tints of the flat landscape; red is perhaps the most favourite colour, pink comes next. A typical part of a *moujik's* outfit is his high leather boots, reaching to the knee; these are replaced by felt ones in cold weather. The women's foot-gear is exactly the same as that of the men, and needs to be, for they have to be out in all weathers, and to wade through quite as much mud as their husbands and brothers. They keep their boots for stony ground, and usually take them off on entering a town. On a cold and wet September morning in Staria Russa, I watched hundreds of them coming in to market with bare feet and legs. What a fine, well-developed, sturdy lot of women they were! Their strides were as long, as firm, as elastic, as those of the strongest man. I remember one in particular, her right foot and calf were encased in a high boot whilst she carried its fellow under her left arm. Her

skirt did not reach below her knee; a handkerchief covered her head; she was a splendid specimen of a kind that Nature can produce when left to herself. I have seen thousands like her, and have consequently no fear for Russia's future, whatever the newspapers may say. The Russian writer who described his compatriots as "a nervously excitable people," was not thinking of the peasants. Give them but the chance, and they will breed as fine a class of citizen as the world could wish to see. Are they not doing this now in Siberia? Who are the so-called Siberian millionaires of to-day—the rich and prosperous farmers dwelling on the other side of the Urals—but the children of Great Russian peasants, who migrated thither to form Siberian colonies less than half a century ago?

The Great Russian peasant woman has one peculiarity which she shares with her sister, the wife of the artisan, and even with a class yet higher in the social scale; she keeps her head always covered,* except in the house, even in the most genial weather. A kerchief, folded cross-ways, is always tied closely under her chin. With regard to her position in the family, she has enjoyed far more consideration and respect since the decay of the patriarchal family. She no longer enters her husband's home as a new slave for the mother-in-law to order about at her own sweet will, but as the respected mistress. Half the songs of the people have for their subject the sorrows of the young bride on arrival in her new home, chosen for her without her consent, and often in direct opposition to her wishes. Old women well remember the time when girls had no part at all in the choice of their husbands. "The times have changed," they say; "the young people are more artful than they used to be; you can't rope a girl to church nowadays, and give her a husband against her will!"

The young men, whose occupation often takes them a long way from the parental roof, betroth themselves

* In the south of Russia the peasant women also wear handkerchiefs, but the climate being more genial, they do not tie them under the chin, and they are consequently more picturesque.

to the girl of their choice, and then, just for the sake of appearances, write to their parents for their consent; the parents, often angry at first, and taken by surprise at their sons' independence, always finish by giving their consent.

In agricultural districts marriage takes place at an early age, the bride usually being under twenty, and the bridegroom seldom more than twenty-five years of age. It is customary in all parts of Russia for the young peasants of both sexes to meet together in the evenings of working days and on holidays for pleasure and recreation. In autumn and winter they gather together, sometimes in the home of one of the party, sometimes in the home of another, sometimes in an isba hired for the evening from a poor neighbour who is glad to make an honest penny in that way. In summer they take long walks together, and join in round dances, accompanied by much singing and merriment; games, too, are often indulged in; there is one popular game called "After the Stag," which is much the same as our "Hunt the Hare."

In former days,* when a young man had made his choice, if he had not gone too far afield for it to be possible, he got a good deal of assistance from some elderly female of his family, generally from an aunt, who, taking upon herself on his behalf the office of *svach*, or matchmaker, repaired to the parents of the young woman in question in order to find out, in as delicate a manner as possible, what might be the state of the family finance. Pretending she had something to sell, she bargained over the "something," till a satisfactory understanding was arrived at. The relatives, quite understanding the hidden meaning of the allegory, would give their answers in an equally allegorical manner. A stranger listening would think they were discussing the price of some such thing as dairy produce, and that the old lady wished to dispose of it as advantageously as possible. She would conclude by inviting the girl's relations to come to the proposed bridegroom's house, and see for themselves the excellent quality of the "goods"

* These customs are still far from being extinct, the office of *svach* exists to this day.

in question. The girl's relations would repair to the house of the youth's parents, and, if they liked the look of the "wares" they would signify their approval by inviting the owners to come and see what they had got to dispose of; in plainer words, to take stock of the prospective bride. If both parties were satisfied, the respective parents would shake hands and drink the health of the bride, after which the real business of the day began. A discussion followed as to what dowry in goods and money the bridegroom could afford. Personal and physical advantages or disadvantages were taken into account; good looks, in the case of the bride, as also in the case of the bridegroom, counted for much, good health, too, and good physique. If either of the prospective mothers-in-law had a tendency to be spiteful or quarrelsome, or either of the fathers-in-law was bad tempered and churlish, this had to be taken into account in all cases where distance would not annul the annoyances otherwise sure to arise. Corresponding qualities in the young pair are not, it seems, even alluded to; their characters are evidently considered to be in embryo, and where the bride is only fifteen years of age this is probably correct, in her case at least. The sum paid down by the bridegroom before the wedding might vary from ten to a hundred roubles (one to ten pounds), according to his means; from it were paid the expenses of the bride's outfit, and all other expenses incurred by the marriage, including the wedding-feast. What the bride should bring with her to her new home was determined more or less by the customs of the government to which she belonged. Local customs are, as I have already remarked, rapidly disappearing, especially in the vicinity of towns and cities. More weddings take place in October and November than at any other time of the year, though the betrothals, which are considered almost as binding, take place as frequently at one time of the year as another. For the wedding-day some chosen friend of the bridegroom undertakes to be master of the ceremonies. It is he who receives the guests as they arrive, and sees that everything is

done in order. If he has a great deal to do, a second friend is chosen to act as his assistant. Three female friends of the bride rejoice equally in the honour of acting as *svach*. The first, a married woman, arranges, as we have said, the marriage; the second, a maiden, adorns the bride for the wedding; and the third, also an unmarried girl, gets the new home ready to receive the wedded pair. It will be seen that the last two are practically equivalent to our "bridesmaids." On the eve of the wedding, the relatives on both sides are invited to what the Germans would call a *Polterabend*. The bride and bridegroom sit side by side in solemn silence, while their friends play all sorts of games, and sing and dance. The girls sing special songs suited to the occasion, and generally receive a monetary reward for so doing. On the wedding-day the bridal procession makes its way to the church, where the village priest ties the knot, with due ceremony. The wedding-feast takes place as soon as possible after the ceremony has been performed, and the priest is, for the sake of good luck, almost invariably one of the guests. The nearest relatives of the bride hasten as she leaves the church to shower her—not with rice—but with hops, which are supposed to indicate a merry future, and take the place of rice even in the higher classes of society. In the villages far out in the country there is still a strong belief in the power of witchcraft, and if there happens to be an old woman in the neighbourhood with a reputation for being a sorceress, she is always invited to the feast in the hope that kindness and hospitality may win over her dark powers, and that, if she is to have any influence at all upon the future of the young couple, it may be of a favourable and propitious nature.

The more closely we examine the old customs still surviving among the Great Russian peasants the more striking is the similarity that we discern between them and the customs now in vogue in Mohammedan countries. If we may trust Russian ethnologists, many of the more barbarous of these marriage customs are identical with those of

the Moors in North Africa; in reading one account I felt as though I were reading Pellow. As far as I have been able to discover, the matchmaker is almost as much in requisition at the present day as she was in the patriarchal time, though the results of her negotiations can hardly be so important, seeing that the young people have quite made up their minds before their parents are consulted, and are ready to act independently of their wishes. The custom of employing a female go-between is one that has been handed down from the days when the women of Russia lived in almost as complete seclusion as the Tatar women. Ladies of the higher grades of society lived in women's quarters, quite separate from the men, and veiled their faces on venturing outside their own doors. It was Peter the Great who decided that they should cast aside their veils and walk with uncovered faces like the women of Western Europe.

Marriage is looked upon by these peasants as a union that can never be dissolved except by death.* "The wife," they say, "is not a shoe, that can be cast off at will." They have a proverb which says, "The knot is tied, it will not come undone for a hundred years." Divorce—by the aid of the law—is unknown among them. There are, however, many cases where the husband and wife agree to live apart, from incompatibility of temper, or some such reason; the husband then takes the boys and the wife the girls, if there are young children. There are also frequent cases of desertion.

All their belongings, movable and immovable, are the property of both husband and wife equally, with the exception of the wife's dowry, which remains her own personal property till her death, after which it goes to the nearest female descendant.† All that the wife can make

* The Orthodox church does not allow laymen to marry more than three times. A priest can only marry once.

† The laws respecting the property of married women are more favourable for the women in Russia than they are in Germany, but the laws respecting marriage and divorce are less so. In Russia there are no civil marriages. See Melnikoff's "Stellung der Russischen Frau," 1901.

by the sale of her cheese, butter, or milk, by the cultivation of poultry, by gardening, spinning, and such occupations, is considered as her pin-money. Only where the proximity of town life has loosened the hold of old customs does a husband dare to lay hands upon his wife's dowry, no matter how much he may want it. In case of the husband's death, where there are no children the wife usually returns to the house of her parents, taking her dowry with her. If she likes she may marry again, but not before her husband has been dead six months, "lest people should laugh at her."

"Is there much intermarrying among the peasants?" was a question I put to one who had lived and worked among them for years.

"No," was the reply. "The Greek Church forbids cousins marrying, to the fourth degree, and a man may not marry his deceased wife's sister. If anyone infringes a rule of the Church by marrying too near a relative his children run the risk of being proved to be illegitimate by those relatives who, by so doing, can inherit the property left to the children by their father."

Many a tiller of the soil, not yet white-headed, can remember the day on which he and his parents were liberated from serfdom.* The peasant has been free, morally, since the year 1863, but there have been, and are to-day, heavy odds against him. How great a hindrance to his worldly prosperity is his blissful ignorance of the most elementary rules of agriculture! But there are other difficulties in his way. When the serfs were liberated the land which the Government bought from the owners was divided into narrow strips before it was allotted to the

* Boris Godonoff suppressed, in 1593, the law which gave peasants the right to pass from one village to another, and at the same time he made them the serfs of their masters. The peasants had previously wandered so much that many villages all over Russia were abandoned to decay. Karamsin tells us that the peasants were greatly dissatisfied, and much regretted the loss of their liberty, though while they enjoyed it they had been nothing but wanderers from birth to the tomb. Rich proprietors, too, were dissatisfied, because they could no longer people all their lands. The connection between master and serf became not unlike that which existed at the same period between the clans of Scotland and their chiefs. It was not feudal but patriarchal. The liberation of the serfs was commenced in 1861.

peasants. Each man has the use of a larger or smaller number of strips, as well as a bit of ground in the village for his cottage. I say the *use*, because he does not possess them; there is a redistribution of land every three years; and many are the disadvantages that arise from this arrangement. A great deal of unnecessary toil is incurred through the strips of land to be cultivated not being close together. A man may have a strip of clover here, a strip of rye there, with often as much as ten versts (about seven miles) between them, and consequently much of his time is taken up in getting from one to the other. From the train windows the land has the appearance of patchwork. Here is a strip covered with standing corn; in the next the corn has already been gathered into sheaves; a third is overgrown with weeds, the allotment of a man who has gone to town, or is perhaps on his way to Kieff as a pilgrim. *A large proportion of the land does not get cultivated at all.* If a poor peasant cannot manage to pay the tax of his land his richer neighbours must do it for him; so lazy ones have a good time of it. There is a movement in hand for the redistribution of strips every twelve years, instead of every three years; but though this will be an improvement, it will leave many evils unremedied. The Russian peasant must *own* his land; then, and not till then, will he work it as it should be worked. German and Esthonian colonists own the land they cultivate, and with grand results—they have been the salvation of the country; their industry has saved Russia from insolvency. An elderly lady, born and brought up in Esthonia, told me that she had a vivid recollection of the introduction, by the Esthonian landowners, of the plan of letting every Est peasant become the owner of the land he cultivated. At first there was great discontent, but in time all were perfectly satisfied. A few years ago a number of young Esthonian peasants in the government of Tver, who had not sufficient ready money to purchase land, persuaded their pastor to negotiate with an agrarian bank in Moscow on their behalf. The bank bought the land for them and they began at once

to cultivate it, the agreement being that for forty-six years they should pay the bank a small sum annually, and that at the end of that time they were to have undisputed possession. So far both bank and peasants have been perfectly satisfied with the arrangement, and it bids fair to prove a complete success.*

If, in the course of time, the Russian peasant, having come into possession of his land, and having learned how to work it, finds that he has not *enough*, he will surely have no greater difficulties to overcome than his brother, the Irish peasant, has to-day. Lord Dudley, in his speech on the peasants in the west of Ireland, reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 16th, 1904, said :—

"The great majority of these people must always live upon the land, and by the land. Their whole tendency and leanings are towards agricultural life. The land to them is a fetich, almost incomprehensible to many, and we should never, in my opinion, succeed in divorcing a population animated by these feelings from the object of their affections. Any remedy, therefore (to the present evils), which is to be permanent and effective, must have agriculture as its basis, and this involves inevitably a redistribution of the existing holdings. In other words, we must seek to cure the chronic poverty of the west by enlarging the holdings in the congested districts to an extent and size which will return a profit in good years and by migrating numbers of families from existing holdings in these districts, to lands which are at present untenanted. Tact, patience, and determination, are great weapons with which to overcome the difficulties in Ireland. . . . . But there is one essential condition on which success or failure in this matter largely depends—the extent to which all parties concerned in the solution of this question are prepared to fearlessly, straightforwardly, and harmoniously co-operate. I believe that the landowners generally will be found perfectly ready to sell, if they are approached in a tactful and reasonable spirit; but, naturally, if talk of legal compulsion is resorted to—before compulsion has been shown to be necessary—and if methods of intimidation are practised, the result must inevitably

* All the above remarks are a result of information received upon the spot in 1904.

be embitterment between the classes whose common interests are bound up in the solution of the question."

These words are as applicable to certain districts of Russia as they are to the west of Ireland.

There was one fault, of which I heard the peasantry accused over and over again in every part of Russia—the fault of laziness. "To what do you attribute this fault?" I asked a lady who had lived among peasants miles away from any town, for years together. "Is it a fault of climate, or is it an Asiatic trait—a legacy from the Tatar?"

"It is neither the one nor the other," she replied, "it's a total lack of training from generation to generation. Not only the peasants, every class in Russia suffers from laziness, to a greater or lesser degree. A Russian hardly comprehends the meaning of the words *sustained effort*. Training, training, training, from our earliest childhood, *that* is what we want."

English bread is made to a great extent from corn grown by the Russian peasant. Our cooking butter, especially that which we buy as "Danish," is made chiefly by Russian peasants on the further side of the Urals. Our wild birds, and rabbits in particular, are mostly supplied to the London markets by peasant huntsmen in the north of Russia. The cheaply-varnished wooden spoons and bowls sold in London as *Japanese* have been made and *japanned* by Russian peasants; they have never seen Japan.*

"Ah! pauvre moujik qu'on méprise, et qu'on bafoue, c'est toi qui es l'avenir, car tu es le peuple, et le peuple russe aura son jour! Pauvre moujik, que serait sans toi la sainte Russie? N'es-tu pas le fondement, les assises solides sur lesquelles repose l'enorme et lourd empire? N'est-ce pas ta main calleuse, ton bras robuste, qui sème le pain? Le sang qui rougit les champs de bataille ne sort-il pas de tes veines généreuses?"†

The latest statistics, published in January, 1905,‡ give the entire population of Italy as just under thirty-three millions, while the population of the Russian Empire,

* See chapter on Village Industries. † Tissot.

‡ See *Italian Gazette*, Jan. 14th, 1905.

including every nationality, and every province, has been estimated by Russians to amount to one hundred and twenty millions, and out of these the peasant population of Slavs only to about sixty millions. Certain English newspapers, published in March, 1905, give much higher figures —one hundred and fifty million Russian subjects, and eighty millions of Slav peasants—but the Russian estimate is nearer the mark. For twenty-seven years there has been compulsory education in Italy; yet, in the year 1901, the census gave the percentage of illiterates over six years of age, for the whole kingdom, as forty-nine—the ignorance of the population of the different regions corresponding in every case to the degree of poverty, with the exception of Tuscany, where illiteracy is disproportionately great, owing to the agricultural calling of the majority of its inhabitants. It is clear then that the Italian masses are not yet alive to the importance of education. In Russia some 80 per cent. of the peasant population are unacquainted with the alphabet. This is not because they have too much to do, for many thousands of the poorest class, in the parts where there are no factories, only get about one month's work in the year —during harvest time; the other months of the year are spent by them in idleness. No one in the world knows so well how to sit still and enjoy doing nothing as the Russian. On many an occasion, when forced to wait for three or four hours at a provincial railway station, and employing my leisure in writing or reading, I have glanced from time to time at the other passengers, to see how long they were going to sit motionless, gazing with an absent expression straight in front of them. I have seen half a dozen people sit thus in many parts of the room without moving a muscle, for hours together, and then only stirring to order a glass of tea. "Kepler," wrote Victor Hugo, "resta quatre ans les bras croisés, mais il fonda une philosophie."—There is a little more life perhaps in the third-class waiting-rooms, for there someone is always to be seen making tea. Tea is to the Russian what beer

is to the German. If there is any truth in Longfellow's observation* that he who drinks beer looks like it, surely tea ought to have some visible effect upon the Russian, but the only noticeable result is that it often sends him to sleep. In England we are inclined to think that tea is an exciting stimulant, but, with our lower classes, it is generally left to "stand" and taken much stronger. Have we not all seen it described in our advertisements as "rich and syrupy"? The Russian takes his tea without milk, and golden in colour. "The passionate fondness of the Russian peasants for tea," wrote de Custine, "proves to me the elegance of their nature. Tea is a refined beverage." Even the cabman has only to say "tea" and you know that he is waiting for his *pourboire*. The Russian peasant is happy when he can put a lump of sugar between his lips, and imbibe his tea slowly through it. Among the *bourgeoisie* it is customary to stir a spoonful of jam into the glass instead of sugar; we find the tea made in a very small tea-pot, and placed on top of a very large one of the same shape in place of the lid, the large one having been first filled with boiling water. When Moltke, as a young man, visited Russia he wrote home to his wife, an Englishwoman, about the price of tea: "At the Court, they do not give more than five roubles (ten shillings and sixpence) a pound; this they mix with green tea at four roubles."†

The peasant is fond of music, and there is no village without its *harmonica*, a sort of concertina, which varies in price from a few kopecs to three hundred roubles.‡ It is charming to listen to the singing of the women and children on the rafts, as they float down the Volga in the still summer evenings; these people are far more musical than the English; nature has endowed them with a correct ear. Whilst travelling in the agricultural governments of

* "Hyperion." † Moltke's Letters.

‡ There were Russian troubadours in the time of Ivan III. Karamsin tells us that they went from village to village cheering the inhabitants with their songs. Mathew Guthrie compares the musical instruments of Russian peasants with those of ancient Greece, and demonstrates that three of them were exactly similar. See his "Russian Antiquities."

Great Russia I always found more women at work in the fields than men; in the early autumn the few men to be seen were engaged in sowing, the women in gathering the sheaves. Corn is sown twice a year in the governments of Novgorod and Pskoff. The autumn grain comes up in the early spring under the snow; but in August and September, 1904, there was too much rain, and the ground was flooded with water just when the grain should have been sown; the sowing had to be delayed from day to day, and from week to week. Had the land in these governments been mainly devoted to the cultivation of cereals, matters would have become very serious indeed, but, happily for the welfare of the peasants, this part of Russia is almost entirely a flax-growing region. A wet year is not disastrous to flax; on the contrary, it is distinctly favourable. The country round the town of Novgorod lies so low that it is always more or less under water in spring. Some of the best streets in the town itself are regularly flooded. A lady residing there showed me a collection of photographs she had taken herself in the spring of 1904, and which she called, very appropriately, "Views of the Russian Venice." The reader will now be able to understand why the peasants, male and female, patronise so freely the white top-boots alluded to elsewhere.* The flax grown in the governments of Novgorod and Pskoff is of a very superior quality; specimens of it, sent by M. Sudhoff—the mayor of Pskoff—to the Chicago Exhibition, gained a gold medal, which he exhibited to me with much pleasure.

The peasant mother who has to leave a young baby in its cradle while she goes to work in the fields, wraps, or rather straps, the infant up so tightly that it looks something like an Egyptian mummy; its arms are strapped to its sides; there is no danger of its getting into mischief, for it cannot move a limb. I saw a picture of one of these mummified babes on a post-card in a shop-window in St. Petersburg and went in to buy it, but the shopman, seeing that I had taken a fancy to that particular card, said he

* See chapter on Village Industries.

could not part with it for less than a rouble; as it was not worth twopence I did not make the purchase.

The ways of Western Europe are creeping slowly but surely into the peasant life of Russia; the custom among women of heightening the colour of their cheeks by the application of rouge has penetrated, by way of the Baltic Provinces, even to the agricultural classes of the Lake District. Girls in villages miles away from any town actually carry little pots of rouge with them to their labours. Formerly they had other methods for enhancing their charms; a girl who had taken a fancy to some youth, and who wished her love to be returned, used to collect, in the evening of a particular Saint's-day, a cup of dew that she might wash her face in it and thus become irresistibly attractive. English girls, too, have heard of this kind of thing. Another plan is to make, on John the Baptist's day, a bath-brush of flowers—in place of the ordinary birch—and beat the body with it when bathing. The peasant girls also believe that if the anxious one bakes a cake of flour into which she has mixed a hair taken from her own head, and makes the youth in question eat some of it, he will be compelled to return her affection. Rouge is now considered more effective.

The peasant women of Great Russia are not as a rule so good-looking as the men. I attribute this to the great proportion of Finnish blood in their veins. In all purely Mongol races the men are the handsomer sex. De Custine, who confined his travels to Great Russia, and saw nothing of the peasant women further south than Moscow, wrote: "Among a hundred female peasants, we perhaps meet with one really beautiful, whilst the great majority of the men are remarkable for the form of their heads and the gracefulness of their features. Among the old men there are some faces, with rosy cheeks and silver hair and beard, of which it may be said that time has imparted of dignity more than it has taken of youth; there are heads that would be more beautiful pictures than anything I have seen from the brush of Rubens or Titian."

CHAPTER V.

FINN AND SLAV.

The Lake district—Roman historians—Ingrians—The Finnish character—Anecdotes—I am reminded of Japan—Effect of drink on a Russian—Famished eyes—Superstitions—White-headed children—De Custine and the Finns—Peasants of the Lake District—Fishing—Hunting—Bears—Deer and Elk—Food of the northern peasants—Finnish tastes.

THE particular region in which a peasant's lot is cast determines more or less the nature of his occupation and pursuits. In the north, where there are so many lakes* that the region containing them goes by the name of "The Lake District," and where forests take the place of pasture land, the chief employment of the people is naturally fishing and hunting. The peasants of the Lake District have Finnish blood in their veins; this region was once part of Finland. Roman historians tell us that the Laplanders lived here formerly and that the Finns drove them north and took their place. There are said to be as many as twenty thousand Ingrians in the government of St. Petersburg alone; part of that government bore the name of Ingria as far back as the twelfth century. The Korels,† another Finnish tribe, are still more numerous; in two governments taken together, those of St. Petersburg and Peterhoff, they are reckoned at a hundred thousand; they were formerly the most warlike and the most cultivated of all the Finnish tribes. Intermarrying for generations,

* In the government of Archangel there are eleven hundred lakes. See Leroy Beaulieu.

† The lands inhabited by the Ingrians and the Korels were called, respectively, Ingria and Carelia.

the various tribes have gradually formed one national peasantry, and are now hardly to be distinguished one from another. These are all very plain of feature, with straight hair, almost as white as tow, and such light-blue eyes that their Slav neighbours call them the "white-eyed tribe"; their prominent cheek-bones, flat foreheads, and pointed chins, their broad, flat noses, and wide nostrils, all betray their Mongol origin. Where Slav* and Finn have intermarried the children have fair curly hair and dark eyes; these form quite a distinctive type.

When the reader remembers that, apart from the fact that the Czar is Grand Duke of the Duchy of Finland, he also rules over many millions of Finns in Russia proper, he will admit that to understand the Russian peasants of a district more than twice the size of France we must know something of the Finnish character. To begin with, the Finns are stubborn to a fault. In Finland they are proud of this, and say, "We are like our own granite." The Slavs who live amongst the Finns of northern Russia say of them, "Once light a fire among Finns, and it will burn throughout eternity." They are hardworking, and as honest as they are stubborn. In old days, in Finland, theft was regularly punished by death. Russians, all over Russia, are glad to employ Finnish servants, because "they never steal, and nothing has to be locked up." I remember how once, when I went to the captain of a steamer which was carrying me to Stockholm, to find out when I could telegraph back to Helsingfors for a valuable gold buckle I had left in an hotel, he replied: "There is no occasion to telegraph; write to the hotel manager when you get to Stockholm, and he will send the buckle on to you. No one ever steals in Finland." I wrote, as he directed, and the buckle followed me to England, where I received it soon after my arrival.

* See Haxthausen: "The purest and most unmixed Slavonic blood is to be found among the priests; for eight centuries they have contributed a hereditary class which have almost invariably contracted marriages exclusively among themselves."

One striking trait which the Finn shares with other Mongol races, particularly with the Japanese, is his love of bathing, and his manner of taking a bath. The Finnish peasants of the Lake District bathe at least once a week, both sexes together, in the public bath; they cannot see any objection to the practice, and no harm comes of it. An English lady, who has lived for many years in Finland, told me that, when spending the summer months in a farm-house in the country, she could never take a walk on Saturday evenings, as it was not pleasant to meet the villagers coming back *en famille* from their weekly bath,—father, mother, and children all stroll home together without a shred of clothing, other than a branch of birch held in the right hand. One day, driving out with a party of friends, she was somewhat embarrassed when, on their coming to a gate, a woman, just out of her bath, and quite innocent of clothing, held it open till all the carriages had passed through. In winter, a whole family coming out of the hot vapour as red as lobsters, will at once proceed to roll themselves in the snow, resting at intervals on some bench near at hand and caring naught for appearances. I am reminded of similar scenes witnessed by myself in a town of Japan where there were no resident foreigners. Once, having ordered a bath to be prepared for my own use, I stooped down to feel the temperature of the water, but retreated precipitately on discovering that the bath had an occupant; a native gentleman, staying at the same hotel, was taking a dip in the water designed for me; he got out at once and walked away.

It is for the pleasure of the thing that the Finn bathes; cleanliness is with him quite a secondary consideration. The Russian peasants of Finnish descent will stay in the bath two hours at a time. In the bare, melancholy country stretching northwards from St. Petersburg to Archangel, the *moujik* has practically but three pleasures in his monotonous life; the bath is one of them; the other two come only on Sundays and feast days, they are—getting drunk, and going to church. It has often been remarked

that the great difference between the abuse of drink in Western Europe, and the abuse of it in Russia is, that while people get drunk every day with us, in Russia they only do it once a week.* Another marked difference may be noted in the effect of drink. The more an Englishman drinks the more quarrelsome he gets; with the Russian it is the reverse, the more he drinks the more amiable he becomes; after a certain point, he is ready to put his arms affectionately round any stranger who comes near enough. From the window of our hotel on a Monday morning we once saw a drunken man embrace half a dozen people in turn, and finally put both his arms round the neck of the policeman who came up to take him off, when his demonstrations of affection were beginning to get troublesome to a priest, who was playing a harmonium in the street and collecting alms.

The Russian, whether Finn or Slav, gets drunk for the pleasure of it, and he goes to church for much the same reason. I never knew, till I had travelled for days together in Russia, that the eye could be reduced to as famished a state for lack of colour as the stomach for lack of bread. The northern peasant, who might wander hundreds of miles from home in any direction he chose without coming in sight of the slightest undulation in the ground, or the slightest variation in the landscape, turns for relief from the endless birch trees and the endless steppe, to the sumptuous interior of a neighbouring church. Here a blaze of metallic lustre, flashing gold and silver, with every colour of the rainbow interwoven, meets his revering gaze. As he kneels in the mysterious candle-lit gloom and sees the precious stones which cover the sacred ikons sparkling like diamonds and emeralds as large as peas, his poor famished eyes drink in the sight, and he feels that heaven has its blessings even for him. His superstitious instinct is satisfied.†

* "Le Russe boit moins que le Danoi moins peut-être que l'Anglais, l'Allemand, le Français." Leroy Beaulieu.

† See Chapter XV. for remarks on Finnish superstition.

The Russian peasants, though they have many strange sects, are all orthodox outwardly, no matter how much Finnish blood may flow in their veins.* The Korels have preserved many of their oldest superstitions; they will push the head of a new-born child into the open door of the stove in order that the house spirit may make its acquaintance; suffocation of the infant sometimes results. They, as well as their Slav neighbours, believe that the soul of a dead man continues to preside over his household for forty days after his death. On the fortieth day they invite the village priest to dinner, place a pillow on the stove—that being the warmest place—for the dead master of the house, and lay a knife and fork for him as though he could still take part in the feast; after this meal the spirit is supposed to take its final departure. Another belief is that the rainbow is a spirit sent by God to the earth to draw water from the sea, so that He may shower it over the fields as rain. These are examples chosen at random; I could give any number.

Some ethnologists have asserted that nine-tenths of the indigenous population of Russia from Moscow to Archangel are of Finnish origin on the mother's side. To the south of Novgorod, in the Valdai district, there is a wide stretch of marshy land, often covered with water in rainy seasons; only the higher parts are inhabited; these were formerly islands; the people who live here are Korels, who, being separated from their neighbours, once by water, now by marsh, have preserved the old Korel dialect. I was told by one who has often visited them, that their women and children can speak no language but that Finnish dialect; the same individual told me that it had often amused him to address the women or children suddenly in their own language, and note their amazement at finding they could understand what a Russian said! Be that as it may, I have no doubt that, if we could only look

* The reader must not confuse the Finns in question with the Finnish colonists in the Lake District, who live quite apart, and belong to the Lutheran church; their state of culture is much the same as that of the German colonists.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Northern fisher-folk.

[*To face page* 63.

deeply enough, we should discover that more of the superstitions still rife among the peasants, are of Finnish, than of Slav origin. With regard to the type, I may remark that four out of every five peasant children I saw between St. Petersburg and Pskoff, between Pskoff and Moscow, and between Moscow and Yaroslav, had *white* hair—white, without the faintest tinge of yellow in it. I did not note that the noses of these identical white-haired children were more flat, or their cheeks more prominent, than those of the Slavs, but to the north of St. Petersburg such characteristics can be traced very distinctly. "All the Finns," said de Custine, writing eighty years ago, "look as if they had fallen on their noses as soon as they were born," a remark that is very near the truth.

The chief occupation of the people of the Lake District is fishing; whole villages are entirely devoted to this pursuit. They catch forty distinct kinds of fish, amongst which may be mentioned a kind of lake trout, called *seeg*, which Russians think a great delicacy when it is well-smoked; *soudak*, a kind of pike, and *okoun*, a kind of perch, are also very popular. The best fish is sent to St. Petersburg and other towns for sale, that of an inferior quality is eaten by the peasants, who seldom touch meat. They make fish patties of the stale fish, so that nothing may be wasted. The Norwegians attribute the large families of the fisher-folk on their west coast to a plentiful fish diet; they, like the Russian peasants, often have families of ten and twelve children; but in Russia this reason was not given to me.

Wood from the forests is very cheap in the far north, so that every man can afford to build himself a nice little house with a plank roof. The space between the ground floor and the soil is often large enough to serve as a cattle shed for the very poor. They build rooms with high ceilings and plenty of windows, and often an outside staircase. The women used to keep their national costumes and head-dresses in trunks, and bring them out on special occasions, but now, commissioners travelling on behalf of

the theatres, from one government to another, have bought everything they could lay their hands on.

Hunting is the occupation of upwards of ten thousand men in one single government to the north of St. Petersburg. In the year 1896 their fur trade valued fifty thousand roubles. Squirrels are hunted in winter, as their fur is finer during that season than it is in summer. Many squirrels are sold at the Nijni Novgorod fair, and many to the furriers of St. Petersburg.

Bears are hunted chiefly in winter; the men form themselves into *artels* of five or six men each; sometimes two *artels* join, if they happen to meet. Armed with rifles, poles, hatchets, and stakes, they set off for the bear's den. After driving a number of stakes into the ground round the opening, and thus enclosing a small area, they thrust a pole into the den to excite the bear, and make him come out; as soon as he is well outside they despatch him, sometimes with bullets, sometimes with hatchets. The hunting of deer and elk is considered the most fatiguing, on account of the swiftness of foot peculiar to these animals; they are most easily caught where the thickness of the forests impedes their flight, or when the ground is covered with spongy snow. Wolves are hunted in summer with guns, in winter with traps. Otters are also hunted with traps, but when the moon is bright in autumn they are hunted with guns. The chief prey of the Russian is the *rabchik*, of which many thousands are caught every year. Partridges, woodcocks and moorhens are hunted with guns, traps, birdcalls and dogs. Thousands of these birds find their way to London markets.

In the government of Novgorod the hunting of hares is a very important source of income to the peasants. It has been calculated that thirty thousand *puds* of killed, and fifteen thousand head of live hares, are sold from that government every year. As the forests are being cut down very fast, whole villages, now engaged in hunting will soon have to turn their attention to some other occupation.

The peasants of the north believe that the bear is a man, who, on account of his sins has been changed into a beast by the Almighty. They would starve rather than eat bear's flesh. They will not eat the flesh of deer because they think it is half a god, and they will not eat a swan because they say it resembles a woman, nor an eel because it resembles a snake.

In the north the peasants are great turnip eaters; they even make a drink, a kind of *kvas* from this vegetable. They also eat a great many onions. Here, as in Finland, the Finnish peasants prefer coffee to tea, and the beggars ask for "something to buy coffee." The more destitute suffer often from scurvy—a result of poor food; when they cannot get enough flour they add moss and hay in making their bread.

CHAPTER VI.

FACTORIES AND FACTORY HANDS.

The other end of the Nevsky Prospect—Village of Rebatskoi—Are we in Siberia? Suburban peasants—The factories—English colony—English church—English enterprise—Chief industries of St. Petersburg—Girls in chocolate factories—Two hundred thousand workpeople—Morozoff cotton factory near Tver—Tolstoi's opinion—Morozoff theatre—Berg cotton factory—New buildings for workpeople—Machinery brought from England—Enamel work factory at St. Petersburg—Effects of the war.

THE Nevsky Prospect, more than three miles in length, leads to the manufacturing suburb of St. Petersburg. At its fashionable end are the best shops in the town, and at the other, or just beyond, are the factories; they line both sides of a thoroughfare which is, in reality, a continuation of the Nevsky. The Nevsky ceases to have an imposing appearance when you come to the Nicholas railway station, and it is here that the steam tram, which runs to the end of the factory thoroughfare, has its starting-point. Wishing to see something of the manufacturing part of the capital we stepped into the steam tram one fine morning in August and set out for the village of Rebatskoi, which lies a few miles further out on the right bank of the Neva. The tram was crowded with respectably dressed peasants from the suburban villages. We all travelled together as far as the tram went, and then most of the peasants departed on foot in various directions. A few, however, were bound, like ourselves, for the village of Rebatskoi, and these, squeezing themselves into a rough trap drawn by one horse, smilingly made room for us to get in too. This we did, and soon we were off again, jolting along on a muddy road full of ruts, with grass on either side and a few miserable-

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Street mending in St. Petersburg.

A begging nun, St. Petersburg.

A tram-car, St. Petersburg.

An omnibus, St. Petersburg.

[*To face page* 66.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

looking trees here and there. I thought I must be dreaming, it was so very like Siberia! The same trees, the same flatness, the same log houses of shining grey wood, the same peasants with matted hair and red blouses, the same pigs running across the road. The river gleaming to the right of us might have been the Angora, and the town we had just left behind our backs, Irkutsk.* All the peasants were comfortably dressed, and extremely polite and amiable. The young woman next me drew from her pocket a spotless white handkerchief, marked in the corner with her initials in large red letters; she wore, like all the other girls I saw in that part, a pair of large metal earrings and about half a dozen imitation tortoise-shell combs in her hair. The married women had their hair concealed in clean cotton handkerchiefs neatly tied under the chin.

We talked with many of the young people, and found that hardly one woman over twenty-five could read, though most of the younger ones were able to do so. One motherly-looking individual explained to me that learning was a new thing, that in her childhood no one in the villages could read; but now, all the children round St. Petersburg were learning. "We can always find someone to read the papers to us," she added. As we passed through the villages we noticed many domestic animals, here a calf tethered to the door of an isba, here a sleek cat watching us through the fence surrounding a cabbage garden. All the peasants in the trap uncovered their heads or crossed themselves, or both, as we passed, first a tiny chapel on the right, then a large white church with green cupola on the left. The last-named, they informed us, had only quite recently been completed. Bare-footed women and children passed us continually, tramping into St. Petersburg with tins full of milk, or baskets of butter. It was a long way to go on foot, but they seemed to take it as a matter of course.

The suburban peasants are quite a different class of people from the peasants living far away from the towns

* See my "A Ribbon of Iron."

and cities. Here the women constantly get employment as charwomen or servants in the summer villas of the St. Petersburg middle-class families, and the men are connected as a rule in some way with the factories, if they are not factory hands. We lunched at the village inn, where tea and eggs were served in a somewhat primitive style. The rough-headed fellow who waited on us was quite distressed that he had no egg-cups to place at our disposal, but after a moment's perplexity a bright idea struck him; he disappeared for a minute and then returned with two salt-cellars full of salt; he stood an egg upright in each of these and handed them to us in triumph. The repast over, we strolled about in the village, where we were soon surrounded by a crowd of neatly-dressed men, women and girls, some of whom begged us to come and take tea with them. The men were pleased at the interest we took in their houses, and, seeing my camera, were anxious that we should photograph them. One woman said she knew many English people, for she had been for years a servant in one of the English families living in the manufacturing suburb.

On our way back to St. Petersburg we gave our attention to the factories, and noted, amongst other important ones, the government porcelain factory, a paper factory, a huge iron foundry, Messrs. Thornton's immense cloth factory across the river, where some three thousand men are said to be employed, Messrs. Cooper and Maxwell's linen factory, and the government playing-card factory. In the steam tram which brought us back to the Nicholas station were two little English girls from the English colony, chatting away together, and making us feel as if we were on the outskirts of Manchester or Leeds rather than of St. Petersburg. Amongst the factories is a tiny English church, with its parsonage opposite, in which the factory chaplain resides, and near-by lives a retired English oculist, who practises only among the poor. There is also a school for English children, to which Russians are not admitted. The English colony* was a very large one in the first half

* See Chapter I.

of last century, but since that time it has been steadily decreasing. One reason for its decrease is that the Russians, having learned from the English how to manage the factories, have become less dependent on the skill of foreigners. English companies, managers and overseers, were formerly indispensable in Russia, as in other countries. When English companies supplied Amsterdam with water, undertook the draining of Naples, lighted Toulouse and Bordeaux with gas, and got 10,000 horse-power out of the Bellegarde rapids, when even Berlin had to wait for gas until an English firm could supply it*—when all these things were happening Englishmen were also accumulating comfortable fortunes in Russia. It is curious to note that many of the Englishmen who are most bitter against the Russian people, and Russia generally, are the children or grandchildren of men who made their money in Russia. There are yet to be found English families in every manufacturing locality in the Empire;† in all cotton, linen, or cloth factories there are employed—an English spinner, an English weaver, an English carder, and an English engineer. But in the case of other industries German managers can now be secured, and, as they demand lower salaries, they are preferred to Englishmen. Belgian managers are more modest still in their demands, so these are now finding greater favour even than the Germans. Let us return however to the factory thoroughfare. I have not attempted to enumerate one-half of the giant factories that line it on both sides, but the reader will be able to form some idea of what a "general strike" in that neighbourhood could mean, if he bears in mind that some three thousand pairs of hands, if not more, are employed in every single one of them. In addition to the factories there are also immense brick-yards, coal depots and iron foundries. Mountains of coal, brought by sea from Cardiff, were pointed out to us as we passed.

* See Herbert Spencer's "Study of Sociology."

† At Rostoff-on-the-Don I found the streets lively with advertisements of English firms.

The chief industries carried on in St. Petersburg are metal works, cotton and paper making, and the preparation of various kinds of nutritious foods. In the last-mentioned one-fourth of the people employed are women. In chocolate and tobacco factories seven thousand women, and only one thousand men, are employed. The chocolate caramels of St. Petersburg, which rank among the best in the world, are made by girls.

In the districts of which St. Petersburg is the centre, the cotton, wool, silk and flax industries are the most important. These, added to the other factories and workshops of the Lake District, employed, in the year 1897, as many as two hundred thousand workpeople, including the women and girls; but the Lake District is in the main an agricultural one, and it is to the industrial governments that we must turn if we wish to get a correct idea of factories and factory life in Russia. The chief centres for the cotton and flax industries are the governments of Kostroma, Yaroslav, Tver, and, of course, Moscow. The best linen goods come from Kostroma, Tver, and Yaroslav; the best cotton from Moscow and Vladimir. In the Vladimir government there are more than twenty thousand weavers.

In the vicinity of Tver, and connected with the town by an electric tramway, is the Morozoff factory, one of the largest cotton factories in the Empire. Here there are twenty-five thousand workpeople—weavers and dyers; they live on the premises in dwellings erected for them by the Morozoff family. Lady Morozoff, widow of the original proprietor, with the help of her three sons, has shown much personal interest in their employees' welfare. Indeed, so successful have her efforts proved, that this energetic lady has won the approval—always difficult to obtain—of Count Leo Tolstoi. Lady Morozoff has built for her workpeople, not only a church, but so fine a theatre that the inhabitants of Tver prefer it to their own, which has practically fallen into disuse in consequence. The actors who visit Tver never think of performing in any other

but the Morozoff theatre. As for the dwellings of the work-people, they, too, are considered to be models of their kind, but they have one serious drawback, to the English mind, they are built to accommodate two families in one room.

Another great factory, also in the neighbourhood of Tver, is the Berg cotton factory. Here two gigantic barrack-like buildings of red brick are in course of erection; in these the entire company of workpeople are shortly to be housed. At present they live in scattered isbas in the vicinity of the factory. When I went over one of these block dwellings some of the lower rooms were already inhabited. There are four floors of dwelling-rooms with a wide airy passage between the two rows. The idea is that the passages will serve as promenades for the inmates in winter-time. (Professor Pagenstecher's new ophthalmic hospital at Wiesbaden is being built on the same principle.) Each room is 10 feet 6 inches by 20 feet, and 10½ feet high, and destined for a family of six—father, mother and four children. It is lighted by a large double window five feet wide and seven feet high; each room is supplied with electric light and has its own battery. A grated window in the wall, by the door, lets in hot filtered air. The families already installed have evidently brought with them the truly Russian superstition about fresh air, and though in this case the air is hot, they are afraid of it, and cover the grating carefully. In several instances I found it smothered with clothes so that no air could pass into the room. On every floor there is a commodious kitchen, containing a Russian oven with ten doors, in which ten women can bake at once without interfering with one another. There are also two washing-rooms to each flat, each provided with a long trough and six water-taps. I should also mention that on each floor there are four larger rooms designated for larger families, or for the families of "gaffies." Each of these can be divided into two by a thick curtain, when necessary. With regard to sanitary arrangements, refuse is burnt and raked out as powder. The floors are of concrete

covered with wood; the staircases are of iron. The ground floor, which takes the place of cellars, contains two great boilers used for heating air and water. The furniture of a dwelling-room consists of a double bed, a clock on the wall, an ikon in the right-hand corner, a wooden table with a good drawer, a cupboard, and several chairs.

Upwards of two thousand souls are to live in the two buildings I have just described. Near them is a wooden storehouse in which such eatables as meat, cucumbers and cabbages are kept for coolness in summer and for protection from frost in winter. Each family has its own compartment in this general larder. Close by there is a group of bungalow hospital-buildings—one for infectious diseases, one for cholera, which has happily been a stranger for some years, and one for non-infectious diseases; the doctor resides on the premises. There is a steam bath attached. All the machinery used in the Berg factory has been brought from England. The manager, spinner, carder, weaver and engineer, are, as usual, English. In St. Petersburg a great deal of English coal is consumed as fuel, but in Tver only wood is used, as being far cheaper, though not so satisfactory. Mr. Cook, the manager's son, told us that quite fifty per cent. of the hands could read, and that ever since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war they had looked out eagerly for two war telegrams a day. Those who cannot read gather in groups round those who can, while the news is read aloud. The workpeople eat very little meat, and subsist chiefly on black-bread, with cabbage as a relish to it in summer, and salted cucumbers in winter. At the entrance to every cotton mill there is an ikon with a lamp always burning in front of it.

Whilst in St. Petersburg we visited, amongst other branches of Russian industry, the factory, or workshop, that supplies one of the largest firms with the beautiful wrought and chased silver, and coloured enamel work, for which both St. Petersburg and Moscow are so justly famed. Amongst the workers we found a number of small boys about twelve years of age, who must have been chosen

for their aptitude, the work they were employed upon evidently requiring both skill and taste.

The enamel is obtained in large quantities from an enamel factory in Geneva; it varies in price according to the colour, red being the most costly as it is made with gold; white enamel is made with silver. One man was breaking little bits of enamel from a lump the size of his fist, and pouring them into a mortar; he added a few drops of water and pounded the whole into a smooth paste; then he spread a thin coating of the paste over the outside of a silver cup, on which there had previously been stamped a pattern, and sent it to be baked for three minutes. Some colours require twice as much baking as others, consequently, when a cup or spoon has several colours, it is difficult to prevent some of them from being cracked and spoiled before the others are sufficiently baked. The beautiful enamel paintings which travellers have so much admired are done on a background of white enamel, and the same colours and brush are used as would be employed in oil painting. Every article has to be baked three times and a fresh layer of colour laid on between the respective bakings; much skilful filing is required to make each layer perfectly smooth. Many little boys were employed in tracing designs upon tea-spoons with the aid of hammer and chisel; in front of each boy lay, spread out on the rough table, a much-thumbed paper drawing of the design upon which he was engaged, and to this he would refer from time to time. In order that the tea-spoons may be manipulated more easily they are partially embedded in a lump of clay, and look like fossils while the boys are at work on them. Many of these youthful artists have been thrown out of work through the war, for since its commencement fewer travellers have visited Russia and fewer Russians have been able to gratify their taste for *objets d'art* than formerly.

CHAPTER VII.

TORJOK.

The women of Torjok—Torjok slippers—Embroidery—Silver medals—A visit to the School of Embroidery—Girls at their work—How the School of Embroidery is conducted—Length of training required—The Summer colony—Working hours—Christmas tree—Drawbacks—Leather work—Badges for Russian soldiers and sailors—Officers' uniforms—Nuns' work—Work done in the peasant homes—Women brickmakers—The crowning glory of Torjok—French cooking—Grilled chicken—Poushkin.

To reach the town of Torjok from St. Petersburg it is necessary to traverse three-quarters of the main line to Moscow, change trains at a station called Novotorjokskaya, and proceed by a branch line in a south-westerly direction, which terminates with the town in question. The journey occupies about twelve hours. The town is prettily situated on the banks of the river Tvertza, which flows through its centre. Like all the older Russian towns it boasts of a great many churches; there are thirty-six. It is said to have been founded by the Novgorodians in the tenth century, for trading purposes, on a site occupied before that date by a Finnish tribe. Petty princes quarrelled over it century after century, and sometimes it was divided between two, one taking the right bank of the river, the other the left. Of the old fortifications nothing now remains, but there are, besides the churches, several curious old monasteries of some antiquity. A convent for women on the left bank of the river dates from 1597. As a commercial town Torjok has always enjoyed considerable importance on account of its connection by the river Tvertza with the chief waterways of Russia, though it

has lost much of its prestige since the construction of the Nicholas railway. Its steam flour mills grind seven hundred and ten roubles worth of flour, while its tanyards, employing nearly two hundred workmen, supply upwards of three hundred thousand roubles worth of leather.

But Torjok is famed above all for the energy and industry of its women. They embroider Morocco leather with gold thread, and turn out handsomely worked cushions, bags, waistbands and slippers. Everybody in Russia has heard of the celebrated Torjok slippers. Five hundred women and girls in the town and its villages are engaged in this work. A school of embroidery, organised by the Zemstvo or Town Council some dozen years back, forms the centre of the industry, and protects the workers from being sweated by the tradespeople. This school was awarded both gold and silver medals at the Paris Exhibition in the year 1900. A lady artist resides on the premises, and her assistant goes periodically to the neighbouring villages to instruct the women gratis. On the occasion of our visit to the school we found the entrance crowded with women and girls with handkerchiefs tied over their heads; the first room was likewise crowded; these were villagers who had come in to town, either to sell completed work, or to ask for more materials. All the finished work they bring in is bought from them at once. We were now conducted into a long room with many windows, specially adapted to give as much light as possible to the workers. The walls and ceilings were a spotless white. Here sat rows of young girls, each with a small table entirely to herself; many had their work stretched upon frames about three-quarters of a yard square. In and out amongst the pupils moved their teacher, gracefully wielding between her slender fingers, not a chastising rod, but a cigarette, from which she took a whiff from time to time, as she bent, now over this piece of work, and now over that. She welcomed us pleasantly.

"Our artist is not here just now," she said; "she went out as soon as the designing lesson was over." And then

she explained that the girls had a lesson in drawing and designing every morning, which lasted two hours.

From this lady we heard a great deal about the school and how it was conducted. No girl is received here till she has passed through the village school, which means that she can read and write, and has some knowledge of arithmetic. Most of the pupils enter the embroidery school at about twelve years of age. The course lasts three years, but clever girls often get through it in two years and a half, while dull ones take about four years. Every summer the pupils are sent to the country for two months to what is called the "Summer Colony." In the colony they all do a little work every day, but not much, as it is holiday-time. They bathe in the river when it is hot, and spend most of their time wandering in the woods in search of wild berries, or playing games in the meadows. This healthy life brings back the roses to their cheeks after all the sedentary work of the long winter. Some of them gain ten or twelve pounds in weight during their holiday. Working hours in the school are from ten to four o'clock, with half an hour for lunch in the course of the morning; very poor girls get their lunch free, the others pay a trifle. All those who require it for their health are given a glass of milk daily in addition to their regular fare. At Christmas-time a party is given to the pupils; there is always a Christmas-tree on these occasions and every girl receives a present. Sick pupils are nursed and cared for at the expense of the school. After successfully completing the school course a girl can earn by her embroidery more than her brothers can make by their labour in the fields, and the man who marries her practically doubles his income. Still, everything in this world has its drawbacks, and we all know that too much sedentary work is bad for any woman. It gave me rather an unpleasant shock to see that the chairs which this school provides for its pupils are of such a form that it would be impossible to get support for the back from them if the pupil sat upright; that is to say, in order to give support to the worker's spine, the

chairs have been made with specially curved backs, consequently the girls never sit up straight, but remain throughout their work-time with their backs curved and almost double. But it is not only the pupils of the school who suffer; indeed, it is more than probable that they sustain far less injury from their close sedentary employment than do the village women, who, without any school training, learn from one another and work in their own homes on their own lines. It is to be feared that in the long run the whole population of the neighbourhood will feel its deteriorating effects.

Continuing our tour of inspection we joined some pupils engaged in embroidering velvet with gold thread; others, again, were embroidering cloth, and others leather. Some were laying small pieces of variously coloured leather on a dark leather background and embroidering them with silk or gold; there are only two places in Russia where this inlaid work is done—Kazan and Torjok; it was from the Tatars of Kazan that the women of Torjok received their art; their designs, however, are original, and quite Russian, hence it is easy to distinguish a pair of slippers worked in Kazan by Mohammedans from a pair worked by the Christians in Torjok. Both of these towns supply slippers, not only to Russian markets in every part of the Empire, but to the still more distant markets of Northern and Central Asia. I have met with these far-famed slippers among the Tatars of Tobolsk, and seen them for sale in the bazaars of Kokand and Tashkent,* and on the feet of women in Bokharan harems. I must add, however, that the embroidered *Wellingtons* so much in vogue among Asiatic women come exclusively from Kazan, for, as regards footgear, the women of Torjok confine themselves to the embroidery of slippers. Nevertheless, taking all their work together, it has been recently estimated that, though their industry is on the decline, the women of Torjok do work to the value of six thousand roubles annually.

* See my "In Russian Turkestan."

Among the forty-five pupils whom we found at their work, there were some employed in stitching on the gold thread which they unwound as they required it from long wooden spools. This gold thread is supplied to them from Moscow, where it is manufactured on purpose. All the badges worn by Russian soldiers and sailors are the work of Torjok women. The government sends them its orders and pays them liberally. The girls prefer this department to any other, and are proud that their work should adorn the uniforms of their country's bravest men. Not only the badges of the army and navy, but all the badges worn by government servants come from Torjok. We were shown the badge they worked for the uniform of mining engineers, the crossed-guns badge for soldiers, the anchor and rope for the sailors—all embroidered with crimson thread on dark blue cloth. For this work cards with the prepared design are distributed to the workers, who lay them on the cloth and embroider upon them. Officers' uniforms are worked in gold thread, the cuffs and collars in separate pieces. But Torjok shares her monopoly of this branch of the work with several other towns; much of it is done by nuns in the convents.

The leather preferred both for cushions and slippers is Morocco leather, which they obtain from Berlin; it neither fades nor puckers so much as Russian leather. In addition to the embroidery a great deal of beautiful white crochet-work is done by the Torjok women; this art is also taught at the school; one class of crochet in particular is used for window curtains. The pupils are also instructed in the weaving of ornamental silk belts for ladies.

After inspecting the school we visited several isbas to see the women at their work. In one we found a girl making white lace on a cushion; everything about her was spotlessly clean; as for the floor of the room, one might have "eaten off it," as they say, or indeed, off the steps leading to it, and the air was perfectly pure. We also paid a visit to an old granny, who sat at a little hand-loom deftly plying her shuttle as she talked to us, and

her grandchildren played hide and seek with one another behind her loom; she was making several yards of silk belt with a blue flower pattern on black, quite a complicated design, to all appearances, but she hardly seemed to see what she was doing, so fast did her shuttle fly; she might have been Minerva herself, competing with Arachne.

We have not yet got to the end of the women's work in Torjok; there are some few who, not caring for the sedentary labours in which so many of their sisters are engaged, prefer to devote themselves to brickmaking. While visiting Tomsk, in Siberia, we once stopped in a street to look at a large building in course of erection, which was swarming with female bricklayers, but it was at Torjok that we drove two miles out of the town to see the kilns where women make bricks. After all, women who can make pastry must certainly be competent to make mud pies, or, in other words, clay bricks. As we have a mould for our patties, so these women have a mould for their bricks, and what the English do by machinery they do by hand.

On our way back to the town we drew up at a huge tan-yard and were on the point of asking permission to inspect it more closely, but it was getting late, and seeing that the workmen evidently took us for revolutionists, if not for Japanese spies, and trembled lest they might be seen conversing with us in their master's absence, we satisfied ourselves with a look at the yard, and returned to our droshky.

But I have purposely reserved to the last the crowning glory of the Torjok women—for this it will doubtless appear to every German who reads this chapter—their skill in preparing chicken cutlets. For this they have to thank a Frenchman. More than a hundred years ago a Parisian in reduced circumstances spent a few days at Torjok. In gratitude for kindness shown him by the family of the innkeeper with whom he lodged, he taught the innkeeper's wife how to grill a chicken. That inn is to-day the chief

hotel in the town, and the traveller who has a fancy for a grilled chicken should direct his *isvoschik* to drive to the *Felukine Grill Rooms*, where, if the season is not crowded, he will be able not only to get a good supper, but to pass the night in the very room that once sheltered a man whose memory is even dearer to the Torjok heart than that of the above-mentioned Frenchman—the illustrious Poushkin.

CHAPTER VIII.

TVER.

Population—"Glorious historical past"—Churches—Archæological museum—Interesting remains—Curious iron ring—Slav tombs—Pillow money-chests—Ink-pots of the Middle Ages—Beard tax—Enamel work of sixteenth century—Ancient candle-stands—Tver costumes—Veils—Pearls—Lace—Pearls from the rivers—Importance of Russia in history of lace—Researches of a Russian lady—Needle lace—Cushion lace—Byzantine lace—Lithuanian lace—Influence of Peter the Great—Lace workers—Tver leather—English tanners—Russian boots versus English boots—Church bells of the Middle Ages—The bells of Moscow—The far-famed Stergensky cross—A Volga reservoir—Japanese prisoners—Monasteries of the Middle Ages—A charming convent—Happy nuns—A romance of Tver—Mausoleum of a Russian hero—Tver and India.

THE Nicholas railway line, connecting St. Petersburg with Moscow, passes through Tver, and travellers by the night express from the new capital to the old look out eagerly at this station for their morning cup of tea. Tver is the chief town of the government of Tver, and has a population of nearly fifty-four thousand souls; but though it lies on the beaten track, it is never visited by tourists, and has indeed little to attract them. Yet Tver is proud of "her glorious historical past"; she was once the dreaded rival of Moscow. Founded in the year 1181, originally on the left bank of the Volga, she now stands on the right, and has done since 1240. Taken by the Tatars, in 1238, her history from that date was for centuries one of bloodshed and discord. Several of her princes played an important part in Russian history, but her independence ceased in 1490, when she was united to Moscow by Ivan III. Her largest church, built in 1689, contains the tombs of nearly all the Tver princes, and among them that of Michael Yaroslavitch,

richly decorated with silver. This prince was greatly beloved by the people of Tver, both during his lifetime and after his death; though he was killed by the Tatars as long ago as 1318, his body is still carried round the town in great state once every year, on John the Baptist's day. The last time, about ten weeks before our visit, the crowd that gathered round the procession was so dense that when, after a halt, there was a sudden onward movement, a woman carrying a baby had the child dashed out of her arms; it was trampled to death before she could rescue it. A man and a girl also suffered in the crush, and were carried insensible to the nearest hospital.

Tver has forty-two churches of the Orthodox faith, and one Lutheran. In the church of St. Troitza, which has a shining silver cupola, and dates from the year 1564, there is a carved ikonostas of the fourteenth century. In the upper storey of this church there is a secret chamber with chinks in place of windows; here the church plate used to be concealed in times of emergency; the nobles of Tver used also to hide their valuables there when there was danger of their falling into the hands of an enemy.

The only historical dwelling left by time* is that now occupied by the Governor; it was originally an Imperial palace, and only dates from the year 1763; the site it occupies was once covered by the archbishop's palace. The present building was at one time the residence of Ekaterina Pavlovna, the sister of Alexander I. It was while on a visit to his sister at this palace that Alexander received the historian Karamsin, and heard him read the opening pages of the first history of Russia written by a Russian. The Governor does not occupy the whole of the building; one wing is the home of an interesting museum,

* After the town of Tver had been burnt down in 1763, Catherine II. ordered a regular plan of a new town to be prepared by an eminent architect; she then commanded that all the houses should be reconstructed in conformity to this model; she raised, at her own expense, the governor's palace, the bishop's palace; the courts of justice, and the new exchange, and offered to every person who would build a brick house a loan of £300 for twelve years without interest. see Coxe's Travels.

UNIV. OF
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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

A monastery at Tver.

The wharf at Tver.

[*To face page* 83.

founded in 1866, and thither we turned our steps after paying our respects to the Governor. In the first room there were several cases filled with mammoths' bones, some of which had been found in the rivers, some in the fields of the Tver government. One of the mammoth bones was one and a half yards in length, and a tooth found with it measured a foot. In another there were parts of the backbone of a whale, discovered in the mud of a tributary of the Volga during the building of the Tver bridge. There were also a number of fossil bivalves, several specimens of coral, and a case of ammonites. The ammonites were not so fine as those in our own local collection at Bath. In another room the curator particularly directed our attention to a curious iron ring four and a half inches in diameter, and as thick as my finger; he assured us that half of a similar ring had been found in Switzerland, and another in Vienna, but that this was the only whole one of its kind as yet discovered. The contents of ancient Slav tombs are of great interest to students of Russian history, and they will find here a good deal of jewellery excavated from the tumuli of Tver—earrings, bracelets, chains, rings —all of a type I have not met with out of Russia. In the rooms set apart for relics of a later date we found an old clock, with a hand for the month, a hand for the week, and another for the day, as well as the usual hands for the hour and minute; this clock was of English make; it had great iron weights, and played a good old English tune. On the wall near it was a chronological map in the form of a tree, showing the descent of Alexander I. from Adam, by way of its thickest branch. There were also some quaint musical instruments, dulcimers more than a hundred years old.

As the curator took us from case to case and from room to room we gathered much that was interesting about the manners and customs belonging to the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here we found a collection of *podgolovniks*, or pillow money-chests, made of strong metal in a shape suited to put beneath the rich man's

pillow, so that he could rest comfortably at night with his head upon his treasure. The *podgolovniks* were not all made of metal; some were of metal-bound wood. The form of these curious treasure-boxes was like that of the wedge-shaped bolsters used so much in Germany at the present day. One or two were covered with elaborate relief, and must have been of considerable value to their owners even when not filled with treasures. Here, also, we found a number of little bronze ink-pots, especially adapted to be worn on a chain round the neck. An ink-pot on a chain was part of the daily dress of the Russian merchants; we saw several like them in the museums of Novgorod and Pskoff. Further on, among the collection of coins, the curator pointed out to us several curious bits of metal bearing the double eagle, and underneath it the Russian word for "money paid." These were receipts given by the tax collectors in return for the beard tax, and were worn round the neck or kept in a handy pocket by those who had paid for the right to wear a beard and whiskers, to prove that they had paid it, and to prevent their being asked a second time for the money. On its reverse side this coin bore a representation of a nose, beard and whiskers, with the date, January 6th, 1705. The earliest records of ancient Slav customs tell us that the Slavs wore beards; the beard has always been considered by them as part of the dignity of man. Never did Peter the Great, in all his innovations, meet with such stubborn resistance among his subjects as when he attempted to make them shave. The peasants thought he was depriving them of their resemblance to their Creator. The enamel-work peculiar to Russia and Scandinavia, which I have described elsewhere, must, I think, have been introduced from Sweden to Russia at an early date; we found at Tver beautiful specimens dating from the sixteenth century; one, a little box covered with enamel pictures, might almost have been mistaken for a bit of painted Dresden china, so fine and accurate was the workmanship; the curator told us that it was more than three hundred years old.

We next looked at some candlesticks, or, rather, candle-stands; several of these resembled the standard lamp-stands so much in vogue in English drawing-rooms a few years ago; others were made with three or four branches, not in a row like those of the seven-branch candlestick of the Jewish temple, but like the irregular branches of a small tree.

The government of Tver has twelve districts, and the inhabitants of each had in former times their own peculiar costumes for men and for women respectively. In the Tver Museum there is a complete collection of these old costumes. We noted that the head-dresses of the women were all high and embroidered with pearls; attached to each head-dress was a veil of lace, silk, or cloth, hung behind the head, but which could be brought forward and held in front of the face to conceal the features when required; the wearer could slip her hand into it as into a glove; it was often embroidered with gold. Most of the costumes for men had a kind of loose coat kilted behind. We marvelled as usual at the Russian love for pearls and lace. The curator assured us that they were mostly imitation ones imported from other countries, and I know that such is the case with all the head-dresses covered with pearls which are still the prescribed attribute of Russian nurses; but after looking more carefully into the subject I found that an enormous quantity of real pearls were worn upon the coiffure and clothes of all classes of Russians in the Middle Ages. These pearls were fished from the rivers, chiefly from the Dvina, the Volkoff, and the Dnieper. Lace stitched with pearls was worn by all classes, from the prince down to the peasant, in spite of its costliness, especially in the seventeenth century, when it was also magnificent in the churches. Crosses, vestments, stoles, chasubles were covered with pearl-stitched lace. Gloves, pillows, and even hand-towels in private-houses were bordered with real lace. There are one or two priceless specimens of early Russian lace in the Tver Museum. Lace was more worn in Russia than in any other part of Europe—Czars,

boyars, merchants, peasants, all wore lace; yet, strange to say, the best books written upon the subject of lace in Western Europe practically ignore Russia as a country that has anything to add to the history of lace. Happily, however, a Russian lady has filled up the void by giving to the world, in 1895, an account of more than twenty years of careful research upon this interesting subject. Madame Davydoff first began to interest herself in the lace of her country in the year 1879; she thought that by visiting one or two of the principal lace-making districts she would be able to obtain all the information she wanted, but soon made the surprising discovery that each of the eleven lace-making centres in Russia had its own particular lace and its own methods of working it; between no two of these centres was there any connection whatever. There was nothing to be done but to visit them all, and this Madame Davydoff did; she studied the lace of every lace-making centre in Russia, addressing herself directly to the workers,* entering their cottages, drinking tea with them and drawing them out upon the subject in question. Her visits puzzled the people; they sought to know the cause of her interest, and were often convinced, in spite of her assurances to the contrary, that she must be a dressmaker. In some of the far-off country villages the women touched her clothes and examined her sleeves to see what were the latest fashions from town; on more than one occasion they crowded round her to such an extent that they had to be driven off. Madame Davydoff found little girls of seven and eight working lace on cushions big enough to hide them from view. At nine a child can earn enough money to clothe herself, and at ten she can support herself entirely; in some centres the little boys are also taught. This indefatigable lady also visited many of the old monasteries and photographed the rare *dentelles métalliques* which she found among their treasures. She especially mentions the Troitsko-Serge lavra as containing very valuable lace of this kind; she also found some in the cele-

* See "La Dentelle Russe," by Sophie Davydoff (a translation).

brated sacristy of the lavra at Kieff. Having been much impressed by the ignorance and blind following of old ways displayed by the Russian lace-makers, Madame Davydoff extended her researches to other countries of Europe, in the hope that she might aid her countrywomen by enlarging their ideas. Italy was the land to which she first turned her steps, for the lace industry reached a high point of excellence there in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It fell off after that, but has been revived by the efforts of the Dowager Queen Margarita. Berlin, Vienna, and Copenhagen were also visited, and on her return she published her book above referred to, and was awarded a gold medal from the Academy of Science at St. Petersburg. The chief feature of her work is the excellent collection of photographic plates.

A great deal of lace is made by the needle; this kind has been for centuries the lace of the aristocracy, while cushion lace has been worn by all classes. The earliest mention of lace in Russia occurs in a document of the thirteenth century, the chronicle of Ipatieff, where it is stated that Prince Gabriel of Galitch wore a coat trimmed with lace on the occasion of his interview with the King of Hungary in 1252. Madame Davydoff has in her own collection some specimens of fifteenth century lace, but it was in the seventeenth century that there was the largest variety; the lace we saw in the museum I am now describing dates from that period. The government of Tver is one of the most important lace centres in Russia. In the Orel government a great deal of lace is made, but curiously enough the peasants do not know the word *krujevo* (lace), but call it *bordure*. This fact alone is significant of the strange isolation of the workers in one government from those of another, for in the adjoining government of Moscow lace is called, as it is in the Tver government, by its right name, *krujevo*.* Old Russian

* "Même dans les motives des broderies rustiques, dans les dessins qui ornent les tabliers des paysannes russes, M. Stassoff croit reconnaître une influence autochthone." See Rambaud's "Histoire de la Russie."

lace was sewed on to the clothes and could be taken off and cleaned. Russian embroidery was quite another thing. The word *krujevo* has been in vogue since the thirteenth century. It is not known at what date lace first came to Russia, but it is clear that as Russia had it before it was introduced into the rest of Europe, she must have got it from Asia. Madame Davydoff tells us that among the "broderies tissues" found in Coptic tombs, which are now to be seen in the Hermitage, there are head-dresses of imitation lace. These having been sent to the schools of lace-making at St. Petersburg were copied there. The exact pattern could not be produced with the aid of bobbins, so they tried *un simple métier à broderie*, and were able thus to get the very thing. Madame Davydoff examined the silk lace on Chinese garments that had been brought to St. Petersburg in the reign of Peter the Great, but this threw no light on the origin of its use in Russia. She found it easy, however, to trace the influence of Byzantine lace. The early Russian princesses founded convents for women, went to Constantinople on pilgrimages, and brought back lace for their churches, which was copied by the nuns. German lace and Lithuanian lace were also copied in Russia during the Middle Ages. A great deal of lace has for centuries been made by the Russian nuns; Peter the Great eventually ordered them to copy the patterns of Western Europe, and from that time the old Russian style has been preserved only by the peasant workers. The oldest lace in Russia is what Madame Davydoff calls *dentelle numérique*, of which there are no models in Western Europe. It has no special design, but consists in the repetition of one *motiv* by counting the threads. The earliest forms of lace are attempts to copy embroidery. In Moscow, Yaroslav and Torjok, Madame Davydoff saw traces of an attempt to copy Venetian models. Eastern influence is seen in lozenges, rosettes, and polygons, which are clearly of Persian origin. Finland had great influence on Russian architecture and jewellery, but no influence at all upon Russian lace; Finnish lace has quite a different character. No-

where has such costly material been used for lace-making as in Russia. The workers used gold and silver thread prepared in Germany, and also in Turkey. In an inventory of the Czar's wardrobe, which was taken towards the close of the seventeenth century, feather lace, down lace, and ermine lace are mentioned; at the same period German workers of gold lace were brought to reside at the Russian court. The Czarinas, as well as the court ladies, used to spend much of their time in making lace, and bits of lace were left in wills as personal property of value. In those days the lace worn by peasant women was as real as that worn by the great ladies. Peter the Great thought that his subjects displayed far too much lace upon their clothes and tried to make them wear less. The result was that the fashion of wearing it upon outer garments waned, but no reduction was made in the amount worn upon under garments. At the present time there are only two districts in Russia where purely national lace is still made—that of Michaeloff, in the government of Riazan, and a district in the government of Minsk; in these two centres the village girls still work it for their own wear. Tver, Yaroslav and Novgorod are the chief centres for the so-called German lace. In every centre there are a number of female lace agents who buy the work from the village women and sell it to the merchants in the towns. The workers are poorly paid, but they know that all the lace they can make will be bought up at once and they run no risks. The agents, on the contrary, occasionally lose goods on the road, or are cheated by the townspeople, from whom they are powerless to recover bad debts. They sell thousands of roubles' worth of lace to the Moscow firms and trust them implicitly. The lace workers of some districts earn only a kopeck an hour, but in others they can make two and sometimes three kopecks; there is no such thing as a trades-union among them.

A large room in the Tver Museum is entirely devoted to articles made of locally tanned leather. Everyone has heard of Russian leather, but it is perhaps not so generally

known that it is from English tanneries that the Russians have learned the art of preparing their leather. The best made articles in this collection were pointed out to us as having been "made in London." As for Russian boots for ladies, they are the most elegant, the most comfortable, and the lightest that money can buy. English ladies who have tried them say they do not want ever to wear British boots again.

In another room was a collection of armour, cannon, battle-axes, and other warlike objects used by the people of Tver during the Middle Ages. Bells were not cast in Russia till the sixteenth century. Those used in the churches before that time were all brought from Italy. We saw here a beautiful old Italian bell with a Latin inscription upon it; it was half a yard in diameter; we also saw a picture of a very fine one which is still in use in one of the churches of the Tver government. In the sixteenth century there were so many bells in Moscow that on fête-days, when they all rang at the same time, it was said that people could not hear each other speak in the streets. In Moscow and its suburbs there were more than five thousand bells. The chief bell, weighing a thousand puds, was hung in a wooden tower in the Kremlin, and was always rung when the Czar started out on a journey and when he returned.

Like all the other local museums, that of Tver has its collection of old church ikons. Amongst them there is one on which a saint is represented spreading out his hands in benediction over a picture of a monastery; another ikon has a view of the old kremlin at Tver, which was destroyed with the town. In the ikon room we found a cupboard full of curious crowns which were the ordinary headgear of Russian monks during the Middle Ages. Some of these were made of wrought iron, others of carved wood, others of a sort of plaster, according to the wealth or poverty of the respective monastery; the iron ones were very heavy; there were also some made of tapestry; these were the lightest of all. We next looked at a collection of curious church vessels, mostly of wood, and at some stained glass

windows, one of which bore an inscription in German and the date 1623. Here, too, were more of those curious tree-like candle-stands I have already referred to; one had a thick stem ending in a socket for a very large candle, while its seventeen branches terminated in seventeen sockets for candles of a smaller size. Near these were some old church pillars covered with beeswax mosaic, another peculiarity of the Middle Ages.

In a lower room we found old Russian tiles; a stone sarcophagus, with the skull which was found in it; and last but not least, the interesting stone cross which has made the Tver Museum famous. This much-written-about *Stergensky* cross dates from the year 1133, and bears an inscription and a square monogram. The inscription says that the cross was placed on the bank of the Volga near Lake Sterg. The monogram, or what I took for one, has baffled all attempts that have been made to decipher it. Before leaving the subject of the Tver Museum, I should like to tell my readers that it is impossible for me, within the space of this volume, to attempt to do full justice to any of the museums touched upon. In no case is my account anything but a very cursory one, and the treasures I have tried to describe have been almost invariably those which throw light, however faintly, upon the past life, manners and customs of the Russian people.

During our visit to the Governor in the morning that gentleman had spoken enthusiastically of the great reservoirs for supplying the Volga with water, which he had just returned from inspecting at the little town of Vashny Volochek to the north of Tver. He had stood on the bridge and looked down upon a reservoir thirty-two versts square by eleven, and spoke of it as a magnificent sight. Tver is the highest point on the Volga which can be reached by steamers. The larger ones start from Rebinsk. It is from Vashny Volochek that wood from the northern forests, which has been felled in the autumn, is floated down the Volga on rafts in spring, when the water is at its highest.

The week before our visit the good people of Tver had been greatly interested in the arrival of a batch of Japanese prisoners of war. There were ten officers and a hundred men; they had rooms assigned to them in an hotel near ours, and used to spend their afternoons in the pleasure gardens listening to the band or watching the people. I have often wondered since how they enjoyed the Russian winter that was in store for them, for I was informed that they were to remain at Tver till the conclusion of the war.

During the Middle Ages convents and monasteries were the places to which people fled for protection in troublous times; hence it is that we find them built like strongholds. They were meant for defence and were often defended bravely. To early travellers they looked like flourishing towns, with their cultivated lands around them. The Monastery of the Holy Trinity, in the neighbourhood of Smolensk, was for many years the principal meeting-place of the Lithuanian merchants; they lodged in its hostelries, and it was from thence that they forwarded to Lithuania the goods they had purchased in Russia. There is a convent for women at Tver which is well worth a visit; it is decidedly the most attractive of its kind that I have had the opportunity of visiting in Russia, and is the residence of some three hundred nuns. We did not find one barrack-like building, but a number of pretty little detached villas, built in a circle and enclosed by a high wall as well as a fence, with an imposing entrance and a high gate. In the centre of the circle stood a church with a graveyard behind it and a campanile at its side. The graves were well kept, and had wire cages over them filled with growing flowers. Each villa had its own little garden well stocked with hardy flowers; three or four nuns resided in each and tended their respective gardens in their spare time. We found some of them embroidering gold thread upon officers' uniforms, others painting ikons, and some engaged in white embroidery work. All were busy and happy; it was easy to see that they were contented from their bright

smiling faces. Each nun had her own little room, the bedroom half being neatly shut off from the sitting-room by a comfortable screen. Each villa had its kitchen and cooking-stove. The nuns were gratified with our praises of all that we saw, and assured us that there was not another convent like theirs in the whole of Russia. One of the artist nuns took us into her studio, which was hung all round with paintings from her own brush, and showed us how she decorated Easter eggs by covering them over with a smooth coating of wax and painting little pictures on them. She also showed us some smooth pebbles ornamented with paintings. Her work is so much appreciated, and she gets so many orders, that she is kept very busy.

On the opposite bank of the Volga, facing Tver, is a monastery which might be mistaken for a fortress, were it not for the prominence of its cupolas. This is the Otrotch Monastery, and its name is derived from the word *otrok*, a page. It was founded, in the year 1265, by a page in the service of Yaroslav Yaroslavitch. The following story is told of its origin,—A certain page, Gregory by name, had accompanied his royal master on a hunting expedition in the vicinity of Tver, and met by chance with a young peasant girl of remarkable beauty, whose name was Ksenia. He fell passionately in love with her, and they were soon betrothed. The wedding followed shortly after, but alas! on the wedding-day, before the happy pair had left the church, Yaroslav Yaroslavitch entered the sacred edifice, caught sight of the charming Ksenia, and, being pleased with her great beauty, resolved then and there to steal her from her newly-made husband. The wicked prince had but to make a sign to his attendants and the thing was done. The bride was seized at the very altar and dragged from the side of the astonished Gregory, who stood rooted to the spot, petrified with horror at so sudden and dastardly an act. But all power was with the prince, and there was nothing that the poor page could do but leave the service of so cruel a master. He retired to a distant monastery,

intending to end his days there, but an irresistible attraction impelled him to return to the spot where he had first looked upon the face of the beautiful Ksenia, and from whence he could see through the trees the castle she now lived in. Here, on the banks of the Volga, he built himself a humble cell. His piety drew other monks to him, and their group of cells formed the nucleus from which there sprang the present monastery. It enjoyed a wide repute in the fourteenth century. Here Ivan the Terrible kept in confinement the pious Metropolitan Philip, as a punishment for remonstrating with him on his evil ways. Ivan himself spent some days here on his way to Novgorod in 1569, while his soldiers were devastating the country round. The story of Philip, and how he was eventually put to death in his cell, is touchingly related by Karamsin. The finest church in the group was built on the spot where Philip was murdered. The people of Tver say that Ivan the Terrible used to send his favourites to this monastery as soon as he got tired of them; they became monks, and were never again either seen or heard of.

On a fine autumn afternoon we crossed the river by a floating bridge, which is always removed before the time of the spring floods, when the current would be too strong for it; the bridge is made of three rafts joined together by iron chains; the sloping banks leading down to them are overlaid with loose planks, which jump and quiver as the horses gallop over them. Until the new iron bridge was built four years ago there was no other bridge but this one; consequently, when the current was strong and the bridge withdrawn, the two halves of the town were cut off from one another for days together. I heard of a young officer who, having crossed over in fine weather, should have returned the same day to his post, but could not get back for three days. In spring the water of the Volga rises till it reaches the monastery walls. Our drive led us out through a wild sandy common, with a few pine-trees here and there and cattle lazily grazing between them. Later on we came to some carefully fenced fields, where women

in red skirts and white sleeves were collecting sheaves of corn, and half hidden in the trees was a comfortable-looking farmhouse. Then we came to wilder country again, and the road, if it deserved the name of one, led us to a village, the single street of which was shut off by a sort of old-fashioned toll-gate. As we came near the gate little bare feet began to run from every direction; we could see them twinkling on all sides and converging towards the gate. A group of merry urchins soon collected in front of us and the great wooden gate was swung open by at least eight pairs of little hands; we dropped them some kopecks as we passed, and laughed to see them scrambling for the booty. We now left our carriage for a while and visited the homes of some of the villagers. At the further end of the village was another gate leading into the private grounds of the Gourko family. We had no idea when we started that the execrable road we were traversing could possibly lead to any gentleman's estate, and it was no small surprise to find that we had come within a stone's throw of an elegant stone-built country villa, a miniature Versailles, with its hot-houses, avenues, lawns and flower-beds. The peasants told us that the remains of General Gourko, the hero of the Schipka Pass, lay buried in a mausoleum close to the villa. As we had met a son of the family on a former visit to Russia, we decided to drive to the villa and ask for permission to walk round the mausoleum. A manservant in grey, with gold buttons but no white collar, came out to speak with us. Madame Gourko, the hero's widow, was absent, but one of her grandchildren, a bright boy about fourteen, followed the manservant and offered to accompany us. Unfortunately Madame Gourko had taken the key of the mausoleum with her to St. Petersburg, so we could not see the interior, but we saw, what interested us even more, a beautiful avenue of birch trees. As for the exterior of the mausoleum, it might have been an *orangerie*, but the avenue of birch trees was worth coming a long way to see. The path that ran between the trees was almost straight, six feet

broad, and nearly half a mile long. The birches had been planted a yard apart on both sides of its entire length, and their silver stems were thrown into strong relief in the evening sunlight, while their meeting foliage, already golden, was tinted, though but slightly as yet, with the warm brick-red that makes the northern woodlands so glorious in autumn. As we gazed down the avenue the silver stems reminded us of a marble colonnade of that slender type which is peculiar to Moorish architecture. Those who have seen the Alhambra by moonlight will have some idea of what I mean.

It was quite dark long before we had accomplished the drive back to Tver, and, considering the kind of road, there was nothing remarkable in the fact that we were more than once within an ace of being thrown out of our conveyance. Bad as the ground was in dry autumn weather, we could not help asking ourselves what it must be like in spring, when the snow and the mud begin to melt together. It seemed incredible that this could be the only approach to so charming a villa.

Tver boasts of having been the birthplace and home of one of the first European travellers who visited India.* Athanasius Nikitin, a citizen of Tver, visited the Hyderabad Deccan in the year 1470. The record he left of his travels is still in existence. His route lay from Tver, through Astrakhan to Bokhara, and thence through northern and southern India. From India he made his way home, through Ispahan and Trebizond, to the Crimea. The journey occupied nearly six years. He complained pathetically that having no books with him he forgot the days of the week, and even the feast days; but added, that in spite of the fact that he could not tell which day was Wednesday and which was Friday, he never ceased to pray to the one true God, though the people around him were heathen with no less than eighty-four different religions. He also complained that India was an expensive

* Karamsin remarks that the people of India probably heard of Russia long before they heard of England.

place to live in, and said that the country was overrun with brigands. He has left a lively description of the magnificence of the Indian rajahs, and says that one temple was as large as half the town of Tver, and that scenes from the life of Brama were sculptured on its walls, Brama himself being represented as a monkey with a tail. In concluding, he strongly dissuades his compatriots from following his example, for he is convinced that though there are indeed many fine things in India, there are very few of them that would be of any use to Russia.

CHAPTER IX.

MOSCOW.

The largest town in Europe—Rivals—The first stone house—Italian influence—Herberstein—Conflagrations—Population in eighteenth century—A phœnix—A city of merchants—Two Moscows—More shops than Amsterdam—The Kremlin wall—The Gate of the Redeemer—Sewing for the soldiers—A daughter of Princess Alice—The Red Cross—The Queen of Bells—The Czar of Cannons—An English governess—Classical School for girls—Greek tragedies—English novels—Influence of English governesses in Russia—Russian ideals—St. Basil the Blessed, "A mosque," "A box of confectionery," "A nightmare"—The University—Lomonosoff—The opera—The imperial theatre—Theatre of Russian drama—Moscow's Regent Street—Rapid improvements—Russia's head and Russia's heart—Cathedral of St. Saviour—Rumianefsky museum—National costumes—Archives—The real father of Russian history—Tretiakoff gallery—Open on Sundays—The most striking picture—The Troitzko-Sergiefsky lavra—Besieged by the Poles—Shelters Peter the Great—Shrine of the founder—Thirteen churches—Wall with nine bastions—Infant pilgrims.

Moscow, the ancient capital of Russia, covers ground to the extent of seventy-two square versts. It is situated on both banks of the little river Moskva, which has a length of nineteen and a half versts. Coxe, who was there during the reign of Catherine II., wrote: "Moscow is the largest town in Europe; its circumference, which encloses the suburbs, is twenty-six miles." The name of Moscow occurs for the first time in history in a chronicle bearing the date, March 28th, 1147. It was at that time nothing more than a cluster of wooden houses, surrounded by a wooden wall, and, indeed, it was nothing more when the Tatar Khan, Bati, appeared beneath its walls in 1237. In the early part of the fourteenth century Moscow and Tver had become deadly rivals, each fighting for supremacy. Had not Moscow prevailed, Tver would have been the heart of Russia to-day, and not Moscow.

It was only towards the end of the fifteenth century, in the reign of Ivan III., that the town began to strengthen and embellish itself. In 1471 a wealthy merchant, named Tarakan, began to build, for his own use, a palace of brick near the Phrolovsky Gateway; this was the first time that bricks were used for building in Moscow. Sophia, the wife of Ivan III., who was a Greek princess from Constantinople, took a lively interest in the improvement of the town; she sent to Italy for Italian artists and architects, but only succeeded, at first, in inducing one man—an architect—to come so far. The Russian messenger was well received at Venice by the Doge Marcello, who introduced to him the architect in question, Fioravanti Aristoteli, who was already celebrated for his successful work at Venice. He had just been sent for by Mohamet II. to build a Sultan's palace at Constantinople, but he decided in favour of Russia on the understanding that he was to receive a salary of ten roubles (£2) a month. Arrived at Moscow Aristoteli caused all traces of the Kremlin church and the Kremlin walls, which had suffered under the attacks of the Tatars, to be entirely cleared away. He then laid new foundations, and constructed the church of the Assumption which was consecrated four years later—on August 12th, 1479. Ivan was so delighted with the work of Aristoteli that he did not rest till he had induced many more Italians to come to Moscow, among whom were silversmiths and cannon-founders, as well as architects. Bridges were built; walls and towers began to rise in quick succession. In 1487 Ivan commanded the Venetian architect Marco Frasini to build him a royal palace of stone in the Kremlin. This was the Granovitaya Palata, finished in 1491. In 1508 the Grand Prince Vasili Ivanovitch commanded another Italian to surround Moscow with entrenchments. In the sixteenth century Herberstein, the first foreigner to write about Moscow, described its streets as narrow and very muddy, but its courts and gardens as large and spacious; he tells us that inside the town, between the houses, there were many meadows and fields. In 1520 there were forty-

five thousand houses and more than a hundred thousand inhabitants. The *Gostinoi Dvor* was surrounded by a stone wall and stood in the "New Suburb." In 1547, two months after the marriage of Ivan IV., a terrible fire broke out in the town; seventeen thousand of the inhabitants perished in the flames, along with their houses and many public buildings. In 1571 Moscow was ravaged by the Crimean Khan Devlet-Gerai, and in 1648 it again suffered from a terrible fire. In 1669 Moscow contained ninety-five thousand houses, almost all of wood, the only stone buildings being the churches, palaces of royalty, and palaces of a few wealthy merchants; the town then occupied only one-fourth of the space it now covers. Between 1682 and 1689 the peace of the inhabitants was continually disturbed by insurrections, and in 1712 there was another great fire; this time nine monasteries were burnt down. thirty-six churches, and four thousand houses; a hundred and thirty persons were burned to death. The reader will begin to think that the history of Moscow is nothing but fires when I add that it again suffered from fire in 1737. Since that time the fires of Moscow have become a proverb. The story went that Moscow had been set on fire by farthing candles, and, in truth, the conflagration was caused by the fall of a taper which a poor woman had piously placed before the ikon that hung on the wall of her store-room. On this occasion a hundred and two churches, eleven monasteries, and two thousand eight hundred private-houses were destroyed; a hundred persons were burnt to death.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Moscow boasted of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The last-mentioned fire was followed by a visitation of the plague, and then, in 1812, there came Moscow's most recent misfortune; to save themselves from Napoleon the people of Moscow set fire to the town with their own hands. All persons competent to judge are agreed that the last conflagration was a blessing in disguise, for, sparing the Kremlin, the flames destroyed that part of the town which most

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

needed rebuilding. Moscow rose once more like a phœnix, from her own ashes, a more imposing city than she had ever been before. Russian writers tell us that Moscow only reached her present flourishing condition after the reforms of 1861; when once the serfs had been liberated all who had a taste for commerce streamed towards Moscow. The population increased with amazing rapidity. In 1861 there were only three hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants; in 1897 the census showed that Moscow and her suburbs together had a population of more than a million* and a city built of wood had turned into a city built of stone. Every year the population of the surrounding villages is attracted more and more to the metropolis—to Russia's great ant-hill, the city of merchants. There are, as it were, in our day, two distinct Moscows—the Moscow of the Kremlin—the Moscow of Russian history, and the Moscow of wealth and commerce. The casual tourist knows only the first of these; one must travel through the length and breadth of the country and visit its remotest towns before one can truly grasp what Moscow means to Russia. A traveller from western Europe, who saw Moscow in 1653, wrote: "It is clear to the most superficial observer that this is essentially a city of commerce and trade; every one of its inhabitants, from the smallest to the greatest, not only thinks of making money, but strains every nerve that he may succeed in doing so. In this respect the Russian nation is far more active than all the other nations of Europe put together." Another traveller of the same period observed: "The people of Moscow love trade; there are more shops in Moscow than in Amsterdam." In our day the factories and workshops of Moscow have been turning out work to the value of two hundred million roubles; the returns of Moscow trade were estimated before the Russo-Japanese war at two milliards. The imports, rail and river, amounted to more than two hundred and twenty million pounds, and the exports to fifty million. The number of

* The figures given are 1,035,000.

strangers visiting Moscow in 1897 was estimated at six millions.

In the centre of this town of commerce rises the world-famed Kremlin, which a thousand pens have attempted to describe. Strange that the most sacred bit of Russia, the most Russian spot in Russia, should have to thank Italian architects for its beauty and its charm. The beautiful Kremlin wall, with its bastions and its five gateways, was the work of a Milanese, Petro Antonio, in 1491; the upper part of one of the bastions however was built in 1626 by an English architect named Halloway. The most important gateway, "the Gate of the Redeemer," marks the most hallowed bit of ground in Moscow, and perhaps in all Russia. No man may enter that gate with covered head. Over the gate is an ikon representing the Saviour, with an ever-burning lamp before it, which is said to have been placed there by the Czar Alexis Michaelovitch in 1626. That gateway saved Moscow, we are told, from many a cruel Tatar attack. Kohl was informed that the French tried to steal the frame of the picture, thinking it was gold, but every ladder planted against the gateway snapped in the middle.

The best view of Moscow is that obtained from the top of the bell-tower of Ivan the Great—which was begun in the reign of Feodor Ivanovitch and completed in 1600, in the reign of Boris Godonoff, the Czar who turned his free subjects into serfs that they might cease to be nomads. The French stole the shining cross from the top of the bell-tower in 1812, but all the damage done by them was repaired in 1813. Behind the bell-tower stands the Uspensky Sobor, the coronation church of the Russian Czars and the last earthly resting-place of the Russian patriarchs*—the church built by Aristoteli.

Opposite the Uspensky Sobor, on the southern side of

* The Patriarchate in Russia only lasted 110 years. The first patriarch was Job, Metropolitan of Moscow, who was elected in 1588, while Jeremiah, Patriarch of Constantinople, was in Russia collecting alms to build himself a church in place of the one that had been taken from him by the Turks and turned into a mosque.

The Kremlin, Moscow.

Another view of the Kremlin, Moscow.

[*To face page* 102.

in uniform who acted as my guide through the Imperial apartments informed me that the ladies had worked there every day, all through the summer—Sundays as well as week days—and that wealthy ladies who had gone to live in country villas for the hot weather, drove in almost every afternoon to do their share of the sewing. A lady stood at a table at the head of the broad staircase to sell post-cards with pictures of the palace and the workers. We bought some, and carried them away in an envelope with a Red Cross in the corner.

Going back to our hotel we stopped to have one more look at the "Queen of Bells" in the Kremlin square. It was cast in the year 1735 and weighs nearly twelve thousand puds; it fell from a burning beam in the conflagration of 1735, and a great piece was broken from it by the fall; it lay where it fell till 1836 when, at the command of Nicholas I., it was placed where it now stands. This wonderful bell was cast at the private expense of the Empress Anne. To provide a bell for a church has always been considered a meritorious act in Russia. Near the bell stands the largest cannon ever cast; it goes by the name of the Czar of Cannons, weighs two thousand four hundred puds, and dates from the reign of Feodor Ivanovitch; its cannon-ball weighs a hundred and twenty puds.*

Once out of the Kremlin we stopped to ask a policeman the way to the House of the Romanoffs. While he was directing us a smile of real pleasure broke over his rugged countenance. I was much puzzled at the moment to account for his sudden change of expression, but he quickly explained it by pointing to the Red Cross envelope I held in my hand, and saying delightedly: "Are you, too, interested in our Red Cross?" There were steep steps up to the entrance of the House of the Romanoffs, and, as my mother began to ascend them, a soldier, who was keeping guard, ran towards her and insisted on her taking his arm and letting him help her up. A prince of the blood could

* This cannon, according to Karamsin, was cast in 1488 by a Genoese named Paul di Bossio.

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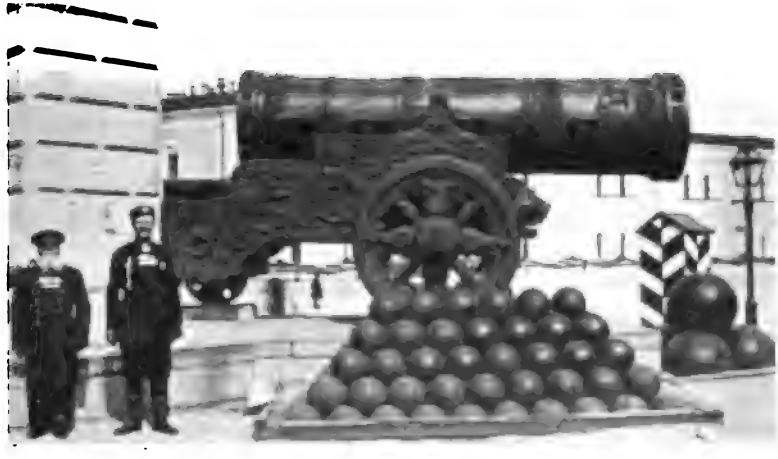
Ladies working for the soldiers in the Imperial Palace, Moscow.



The Czar of Cannons in the Kremlin Square, Moscow.

[*To face page* 104.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

not have performed that act more gracefully. The soldier, too, had seen our Red Cross envelope.

After we had examined the cradle and childish toys of the first of the Romanoffs we called on an aged English governess who has lived in Russia for the last thirty-eight years. She is now a teacher of English to the younger pupils in Madame Fisher's Classical School for girls, established in 1872, and the first of its kind in Russia. The pupils of the school are drawn from the best families in the country. The fee for one year is six hundred roubles. The upper classes are taught by professors from the University, the lower by resident lady teachers. Greek tragedies are occasionally performed by the pupils and patronised by the Imperial family. The English governess told us that English books were in great demand among the pupils; they read eagerly such authors as Charlotte Yonge, Mrs. Henry Wood, and Miss Austen.

"But English novels are not now what they once were," she added sadly, "a new English novel came the other day and I saw one of the Russian teachers make a grimace as she read it. I have no desire to go back to England; I have made my home in Russia and I wish to die here. The Russians are as kind to me as my own people could ever be. I have joined the Greek Church, and I wish to die in it."

This old lady was, however, an exception to the general rule, for English governesses in Russia seldom change their religion, though, in many cases, they become part and parcel of the homes they enter, and stay with their pupils and their pupils' children till the end of their lives. It is against the nature of the kind-hearted Russians to turn off an old dependant. The influence of English governesses in Russia has, on the whole, been very good. They have successfully imbued their pupils with a love and veneration for the good and the true, and thanks to them, the ideals of many a Russian of to-day are not so very different from those of Englishmen.

I have spared my readers a lengthy account of the tower

of Ivan the Terrible and the other treasures of the Kremlin, but I have not the strength of character to pass by in silence that pride and darling of Moscow which stands outside the Kremlin—the church of St. Basil the Blessed, which Napoleon designated as "a mosque," and de Custine as "a box of confectionery," and Augustus Hare as "a nightmare." This remarkable church was built at the command of Ivan the Terrible, in 1554-57, by two Russian architects, Postniky and Varmoi. "It is," says a Russian writer of our own day, "the first monument of the purely national and individual style of Russian church architecture." The interior of this remarkable church consists of eleven small chambers, in one of which repose the remains of St. Basil the Blessed. In 1611 it was ransacked by Polish troops, and in 1812 by the French. In 1839 it was restored and given its present appearance. The decoration and colouring of some of its cupolas—if I may venture to add my own humble impression—is strikingly like that of the tombs of the Mamelukes at Cairo, and anything but Russian. The tale of the architect's eyes having been put out that he might not build another is absolutely false, much as travellers love to repeat it. Every traveller has tried to be brilliant in describing the church of St. Basil,—to find some new and striking simile or metaphor which no one else has used,—and two or three have succeeded admirably.

The Moscow University, the oldest university in Russia,* was founded in 1755, in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, and partly through the influence of the poet Lomonosoff. It consists of two groups of buildings, the old university and the new university, separated by Nikitsky Street; the latter contains a valuable museum of zoology; it has also

* N. Turguenieff, writing in 1847, remarked, "In no country has any establishment been more useful, more fertile in beneficial results, than the University of Moscow." He also remarked that the reason for its exceptional usefulness lay in the fact that, instead of being simply modelled on the plan of other European universities, it had been carefully fitted to the wants and requirements of Russia. Amongst other advantages it had numerous travelling scholarships which enabled many to finish their studies abroad.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The Church of St. Basil, Moscow.

[*To face page* 106.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

fine mineralogical and geological collections and has departments devoted respectively to anatomy, archæology and botany. In front of the new university there is a bronze bust of Lomonosoff which was placed there in 1876. Lomonosoff, "the great refiner of his native tongue," was born in 1711; he was the son of a fishmonger of Archangel. His chief merit is derived from his odes, the first of which was written in 1739, while he was studying in Germany; these odes are greatly admired for originality of invention, sublimity of sentiment and energy of language. The poet made Pindar his model. He is spoken of as "the Father of Russian Poetry," for he enriched his native language with many species of composition. Lomonosoff also distinguished himself as a painter and as a copyist in mosaic. Some of his work is to be seen in St. Petersburg. There is a monument to his memory in Archangel, his native town.

The Theatre Square, one of the finest squares in the city, contains the handsome Opera House, the Imperial Theatre, and the Imperial Theatre of Russian Drama. The Imperial Theatre was opened in 1824, and rebuilt, after a fire, in 1854; it contains six tiers of boxes, and seats four thousand spectators. The Imperial Theatre of Russian Drama was opened in 1841, and seats a thousand spectators. The actors of this theatre are famed throughout the length and breadth of Russia.

The Petrovka is Moscow's Regent Street, and right well does it compare with our own. During the last four years it has improved with incredible rapidity, as also have several other fine streets in its neighbourhood. Magnificent buildings are rising in every direction; two of the streets are already admirably paved, and, if peace and prosperity are vouchsafed to Russia, in a few years there will not be a handsomer city in Europe than Moscow. While Moscow is the heart of Russia, St. Petersburg is its head; neither could well take the place of the other. Russia has changed her capital five times—Novgorod, Kieff, Vladimir, Moscow and St. Petersburg, all have had their

turn. Will Odessa one day try her luck? This, time alone can show.

One of the sights of Moscow is the new cathedral of St. Saviour, begun in 1837 and finished in 1883. It is a monument in memory of Moscow's escape from the French in 1812. It covers ground to the extent of 1,500 sajens (or 6,750 square yards), and its height is stupendous. Enormous paintings by the first artists of Russia decorate its interior; many of them are the work of the unfortunate Vereschagin who perished with Admiral Makaroff at the commencement of the Russo-Japanese war. On the walls of a corridor which runs round the cathedral are a hundred and seventy-seven marble tablets bearing Imperial manifestoes and the names of the fallen heroes of 1812. The cathedral is built of fine white sandstone quarried near Moscow, and its many cupolas are covered with gold, which has a truly dazzling effect in sunshine.

The Rumianefsky Museum, besides its priceless collection of curios, contains the Moscow Public Library, of seven hundred thousand volumes, and a fine public reading-room; this museum is especially famous for a wonderful collection of Russian national costumes which I have mentioned elsewhere.

Another great pile,—the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,—contains all the most precious and the most ancient chronicles of Russian history, except that of Nestor. Russia's first modern historian of any importance was a German, born in Westphalia, in 1705. Müller is called by some writers the "father of Russian history," and as he came before Karamsin, and collected, during a long life, much of the valuable material afterwards used by that historian, he seems to deserve the title more than does the latter, to whom it has, however, been given by other writers. Müller discovered in the Archives an important document relating to Russian navigation in the Frozen Sea, and thus settled the dispute as to whether Asia and America were separated by the sea, or not. This discovery is said to have given rise to the expedition of Captain Cook.

Müller was elected a member of the Royal Society on the occasion of his visit to England. When Coxe visited Moscow, Müller showed him the original letter of Philip and Mary granting a charter to the English Factory settling at Archangel. Müller died before his work was finished.

The Historical Museum has a hall devoted to the Caucasus, where are displayed many interesting models of Caucasian dwellings—some literally underground. Here also is to be found the wonderful collection of forty-three stone female figures found on ancient Slav tombs in southern Russia, some of them seven feet high.*

The gallery of modern paintings, called the Tretiakoff Gallery, is the best of its kind in Russia; the collection was made by two artists, the brothers Tretiakoff, and presented by them to the town in 1893; it contains one thousand five hundred valuable and very carefully chosen pictures, representing Russian schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Here are to be found the masterpieces of such artists as Ivanoff, Reapin, Vereschagin, Polienoff, Vasnetzoff, and others of undying fame. Finding our hotel uncomfortable on the occasion of one of our former visits to Moscow we spent a Sunday morning in this picture gallery. Never shall I forget the interesting sight that presented itself. Streams of Russians—men, women and children—of the very lowest class, poured steadily through the rooms, gazing with awe-struck delight at the pictures and never once raising their voices above a whisper. It was in the early days of February, deep snow lay on the ground, the thermometer was many

* These Scythian statues or *babas*, as the Russians call them, were found standing upright upon tumuli mostly in Southern Russia, their base being a piece of stone fashioned so as to stick firmly into the ground. Some have thought that the cup which each statue holds with both hands was intended to receive the alms of passing nomads, but Mathew Guthrie saw some holding cups which were not hollow, but solid masses of stone. The same writer quotes Ammianus Marcellinus, who, seeing some of these statues in the fifth century, described them as being true representations of the Hunnish face. It was about that time that the Huns ravaged Europe under Attila. The English monk Rubriquis also mentions seeing such statues while on his "holy mission to Tartary" about the year 1253. For further remarks on this subject, see chapter on Pskoff.

degrees lower than we ever have it in England, and the air many degrees sharper. Where would all those poor people have spent that Sunday morning if the County Council of Moscow had thought it wrong to open the doors of the Tretiakoff Gallery on a Sunday?

The most striking picture is perhaps that of a prisoner in the underground prison at Bokhara,* painted by Verestchagin, who visited Central Asia in his younger days. The prisoner is looking up to the only opening in his filthy dungeon—a little round hole in the roof—and a beam of pale moonlight, striking down upon his head, lights up the weirdest of scenes. That prison was done away with some few years since through the instrumentality of M. Lessar, then the Czar's representative at the Bokharan court. This picture is railed off and has a little carpet before it inside the railing.

Some sixty-six versts distant from Moscow, on the Yaroslav railway line, lies the Troitzko-Sergiefsky Lavra, the richest of the three lavras in Russia. It was founded by Sergie Radoniefsky in 1340, and finished on September 25th, 1391; it played a great part in the freeing of Russia from the Tatar yoke. In the beginning of the seventeenth century this lavra sustained a sixteen months' siege by the Poles, and its abbot was one of its most courageous defenders. It had long been, not only self-supporting, but very wealthy, and in this time of national distress it expended its riches in aiding the suffering people; its cloisters and its churches were turned into hospitals filled with the dying and the wounded, and many were the acts of self-sacrifice performed by the tender-hearted monks. The abbot supported the efforts and strengthened the hands of Menin and Pojarsky, and Russia was saved. Between 1682 and 1689 it protected under its roof the young Princes Peter and John, who would otherwise have been put to death. The oldest of its churches, the Troitzkaya, was begun in 1422, on the site of an older wooden one. It is here that its founder lies buried, and it is here that

* See my "In Russian Turkestan."

thousands and thousands of pilgrims come to imprint a kiss upon its silver shrine.

In order to have plenty of time at the lavra we left Moscow by an afternoon train and slept the night at one of the two hotels appointed for pilgrims from a distance. Every room in that hotel had its price on the outside of the door in large letters. The prices ranged from fifty kopecks (a shilling) to two roubles (four shillings). We chose one which had two beds and a sofa and was marked at one and a half roubles. We were waited on and served with supper, as in any other provincial hotel, and had only to cross a large square to reach the lavra gate the following morning.

Over the shrine of the founder, to which we at once directed our steps, we noted a massive silver canopy, said to weigh twenty-five puds. The church, which was very dark, was tightly packed with pilgrims, mostly of the peasant class, and it was difficult to get a good view of anything. On the ikonostas hangs an ikon painted by one of Russia's most famous ikon painters of the Middle Ages; it was framed, at the command of the Czar Boris Godonoff, with gold and precious stones, amongst which shines an enormous emerald.

We visited many of the churches, but not all—for there are thirteen of them—and were taken to see the jewels, and gold and silver vessels, strongly guarded under lock and key. The bell-tower also attracted our attention; it has a bell weighing four thousand puds. The training college for priests in this lavra is famous for having provided Russia with many of her greatest divines; it has a rich library of church literature. Outside the walls of the lavra there is an extensive garden with a little river running through it. The circumference of the lavra walls is nearly a mile, and they have nine bastions. The town, which has sprung up on the western side, has a population of twenty-four thousand five hundred inhabitants, who are chiefly employed in paper-making, toy making, and silk weaving; some six hundred workmen are engaged in the various

factories. Booths, filled with simple hand-made toys, form a great attraction for the women pilgrims, who bring their children of all ages with them to the lavra, and are glad to provide their little ones with inexpensive playthings that will amuse them through the long hours passed in the churches. Among the children held before the altar to receive the priest's blessing after the morning service I saw one child which did not appear to be a week old. On my enquiring its age of the woman who held it, she smilingly replied, "Three days." I suppose she was its grandmother, for she seemed very anxious that it should get a blessing, and retired with a look of great satisfaction as soon as the ceremony had taken place.

CHAPTER X.

NOVGOROD THE GREAT.

First impressions—A peep into the past—Origin of the republic—An exception to the rule—A spirit of enterprise—Conquered tribes—The merchandise of Asia—Pride of the Novgorodians—Tatar hordes—Lake Ilmen—The Volkhoff and the Kama—The Novgorod museum—Eight hundred skulls—M. Peredolsky and the ancient Slavs—Stone implements—Boomerangs—Rare oil lamps—Fetiches—Traces of prehistoric man—Before the use of verbs—Laws written upon skins—The cathedral of St. Sophia—The so-called *golosniks*—M. Peredolsky's theory—The prophetic hand—The Znamensky cathedral—Stone balls—Hanseatic remains—Hanseatic merchants and Novgorod—A strange little nest—Hutinsky monastery—Ivan the Terrible—The boyars of Novgorod—Fall of Novgorod—Fate of the citizens—The Novgorod of to-day—Pig-sties and electricity.

OUR train approached Novgorod as soberly and as gingerly as if it had been carrying porcelain, to borrow the expression of a French writer.

"We shall be in the station in less than four minutes," said a fellow-passenger, taking out his watch.

"Are you quite sure we are so close?" I replied dubiously, "there is not a house in sight, and I can see nothing on either side of us but green meadows dotted with churches and monasteries."

It was nearly six o'clock, and the glorious rays of a northern sunset were flashing back to the west from many a golden cupola that could be seen from the train windows. My fellow-passenger was right; we were close to the station of Novgorod and all the churches we were passing, though now out in the meadows, were once within the walls of Novgorod the Great.*

* Chancelor, the captain of one of the ships which accompanied Sir H. Willoughby to Archangel in 1553, passed through Novgorod on his way to and

"How are the mighty fallen!" was our mental ejaculation as we stepped into a mud-bespattered droshky and told the *isvoschik* to drive us to the cleanest hotel available. There was nothing for the eye to rest on but a few scattered isbas by the station, and some low uncomfortable-looking whitewashed houses that lined the unpaved streets, to remind us that we were on historical ground. Yet, after a drive of some minutes, we reached the picturesque remains of the deep moat (now choked with tall trees and shrubs) surmounted by fragments of the old city wall. Looking at these we forgot for a moment that we were only in a dull provincial town of hardly second-rate importance, for our thoughts flew back to the fourteenth century, to the time when two of the most flourishing towns in Europe were Nüremberg and Novgorod, and Novgorod was greater and more powerful than Nüremberg. But how different has been their fate! The student of the past can still wander through the mediæval city of Nüremberg, for time has treated it kindly; the old castle is there still, almost intact within as well as without, and the iron maiden still stands where she stood in the days of her horrible activity; the houses of former times are not only standing, but inhabited; the round towers, the malt-house, the moat, the hospital, built in 1329—all are there; but what is left of Novgorod? Nothing but a few walls, part of a moat and some whitewashed churches.* It was necessary that Novgorod the Great should sink into oblivion in order that Moscow might reign in her stead.

from Moscow. He is spoken of by some writers as the "discoverer of Moscow." Of Novgorod he wrote: "Next unto Mosco the city of Novgorode is reputed the chiefest in Russia, for although it be in majesty inferior to it, yet in greatness it goeth beyond it. It is the cheapest and greatest mart town of all Moscovy, and albeit the Emperor's seat is not there, but at Mosco, yet the commodiousness of the river, falling into that gulf which is called Sinus Finnicus, whereby it is well frequented by merchants, makes it more famous than Mosco itself."

* "No place ever filled me with more melancholy ideas of fallen grandeur than Novgorod. . . Its antiquity is proved by a passage in the Gothic historian Journaudes, in which it is called Civitas Nova." Coxe's Travels.

To reach the hotel our droshky had to pass between one of Russia's oldest and most historic churches on our left, and the newest and most beautiful of all her monuments on our right—the monument of "a thousand years of history."

"But why," the reader may ask, "has a commercial town of secondary importance been chosen as the site of Russia's most beautiful monument?" Because that town and that site are more closely connected with the origin and early struggles of the Slav race than any other, and the monument in question commemorates the completion of a thousand years of Russian history.* From time immemorial the Slavs seem to have dwelt in this region. Their principal town in early history was situated near Lake Ilmen, and called Slavensk. This town, having been twice devastated by sickness and war, was abandoned by its inhabitants, who, towards the middle of the fifth century, returned to build, upon the banks of the Volkhoff, only a mile away from Slavensk, a town which they called Novgorod. This town, owing to its situation, soon became a commercial one, and was not long in forming a powerful republic. The republic was continually agitated by internal dissensions, till the people, worn out by them at last, called upon three brothers of the Varangian race to come and govern them. When the brothers, Rurik, Sinaf and Trouvor arrived, they separated, fixing upon the three principal frontiers as their respective strongholds. Rurik built a town near the Volkhoff, now called "Old Ladoga." Sinaf settled at Bielezero, and Trouvor at Isborsk, near Pskoff. The power of sovereignty had not been given to them, they were simply looked upon as generals, whose business it was to protect the frontiers of the republic. The inhabitants of Novgorod, soon weary of the protection of Rurik, who wished to reduce them to a kind of slavery, revolted against him. Rurik defied them and killed their leader with his own hand. His power was increased by the subsequent death of his two brothers, who left no

* Karamsin calls Novgorod "the cradle of the Slav race."

heirs. Rurik lived in peace after the victory which he had gained over his subjects, and died after a reign of seventeen years, leaving under the guardianship of Oleg—a relative—his infant son of four years, named Igor. Oleg abused his power, and for his own glory tried to increase the dominions of his ward. He assembled his numerous troops, Slavs, Tchoudes and Varangians, and marched towards Smolensk, then the capital of the Krivitches. Arrived in the vicinity of Kieff, under the pretext of friendship, he attracted to his camp the two brothers Oskold and Dii, who were then reigning at Kieff, and caused them to be massacred in cold blood; this cowardly act rendered him master of Kieff, and he lost no time in making that town the chief stronghold of his dominions. Henceforward Novgorod ceased to be the first city of the Slavs. Oleg, having taken up his abode in Kieff, continued to make himself more and more powerful. He subdued several other peoples, founded new cities, and imposed upon the various tribes whom he had brought into subjection a tribute in skins and silver. Tradition says that he armed eighty thousand men and with them descended the Dnieper, with infinite hardships, to attack the walls of Constantinople. Leo, the philosopher, who then reigned in that city, bought peace with many gifts, and Oleg returned to Kieff laden with great wealth. Greek historians, however, do not speak of this expedition of Oleg's. Oleg died from the bite of a serpent after governing the country for thirty-three years. After his death the people rose against Igor and tried to shake off his yoke; he succeeded in subduing them, but suffered heavy losses; he was eventually murdered by the Drevlianes, and left his young son Svatoslav under the guardianship of his mother Olga.*

We will now look a little more closely into the early history of Novgorod. To whom did the great republic owe its origin? To a tribe of rude fishermen, who settled on the shores of Lake Ilmen, attracted by the bountiful supply of fish to be obtained from its waters. We are told

* See Chapter XXIX. for Olga's history.

that wealth in its earliest stages has always been found to depend on soil and climate, and that there is no instance in history of any country being civilised by its own efforts, unless it has possessed one of these physical conditions in a very favourable form; * but what of Novgorod, which rose out of a marsh, the surface of which was frozen for six months of every year? That marsh extended for many a mile, as it does in the present day; half the streets of the existing town are under water every spring. One of the oldest pictures of Novgorod in the local museum tells the same story, for it represents the town as a series of islands floating in the midst of a lake.

Surrounded by other tribes—of Finnish origin—who were neither powerful nor warlike, the Slav fishermen gradually took the upper hand, till at last they were in a position to dominate over their more immediate neighbours. It is an established truth that conquered nations borrow much from those who have subdued them, and the people of Novgorod, whether conquered or not, learned a great deal from the Varangians after Rurik had made himself master of the Republic. We are told that they imbibed from the Varangians a taste for commerce, a spirit of enterprise and a love of navigation. Novgorod became again a Republic; she made her own laws, she was her own judge, she limited the power of her princes, made war, or engaged in commerce, when, where and how she pleased. As far back as the ninth century she had commercial relations with Constantinople, and in the twelfth century she sent her vessels to Lubeck. She opened a route across the dark and, until then, impenetrable forests to the borders of Siberia, as far as Ufa. She conquered all the tribes dwelling between Ladoga and the White Sea, and introduced to them the earliest germs of civilisation, and even the Christian faith.

It was through Novgorod that the rich merchandise of Asia found its way to Northern Europe. It was by way of Novgorod that Russia received the manufactured goods

* See Buckle's "Civilisation in England," vol. i.

of Europe and the blessings of Western civilisation. Novgorod was as renowned for the sagacity of her merchant princes as for the valour of her warriors. Proud, indeed, were her walls—proud at having shattered the armies of many a valiant foe—till at last that pride became a proverb in the mouth of every citizen. "Who," they repeated loftily, "could hope to stand against God and Novgorod the Great? We have never," said the people of Novgorod, "been oppressed by the Tatar hordes; no Moslem crescent has ever risen above the cupola of our cathedral. Who else in Russia can say as much? We have paid tribute to the accursed Mongols, it is true, but never have they crushed us with their tyranny."

The tribes who dwelt upon the shores of Lake Ilmen in prehistoric times left behind them distinct traces of Buddhism, Shamanism, fire-worship and fetichism, which did not disappear till the sixteenth century, but from the founding of Novgorod until the conversion of its inhabitants to Christianity, the only idol worshipped there seems to have been the god Peroun,* brought to the banks of the Volkhoff by Vladimir in the ninth century, not many years, according to Russian archæologists, before the same prince introduced Christianity.

I have said that nothing remains at Novgorod the Great but its churches and monasteries, and this is true as regards buildings, but, thanks to the zeal and diligence of Russian archæologists, some important excavations have taken place during recent years and discoveries have been made which throw much light on the past. The country round Lake Ilmen has yielded indications that there was once a close intercourse between its inhabitants and the peoples of Siberia, of Central Asia, and especially of India; ancient monuments found along the courses of the great waterways show us by what routes that intercourse was carried on. The river Volkhoff and its tributaries are connected with the Volga and its tributaries, and the

* See M. Peredolsky's "Antiquities of Novgorod" (published in Russian), 1898.

Kama connects them with the rivers of Siberia beyond the Ural Chain. These, in their turn, formed a commercial route between India in the south, and Kamschatka in the north. Knives, hatchets, sickles, ploughshares and various household utensils recently excavated near Novgorod bear so close a resemblance to similar articles found in Siberia and in Central Asia that they might well have been fashioned on the same spot and by one and the same man. Other articles bear an equally close resemblance to those found in Sweden and Norway, in North Germany and in Britain. The stone implements found in the circular graves in England correspond to the stone implements of the so-called "Lake Period," round Lake Ilmen, while bronze implements found in the oblong graves in England correspond to the bronze implements excavated in the vicinity of Lake Ilmen, which Russian archæologists label as "prehistoric."

Though the study of man and mankind was so quickly developed in Western Europe during the nineteenth century, and although so much attention has been paid of late to the comparative measurement of skulls as a means of tracing the history of races, one of the richest fields of this kind of research has so far remained untouched. The banks of Lake Ilmen are thick with skulls, many of which, to judge from the strata in which they are embedded, must have rested there since prehistoric times. In the Novgorod Museum there is one solitary skull; and that, a very small one, was discovered at a considerable depth beneath the pavement of the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and must, therefore, have lain there since the thirteenth century. It was in a private museum in the house of a Novgorod lawyer that I found skulls of more ancient date. M. Peredolsky, to whom I have already referred, has done more to unearth this part of Novgorod and the surrounding country than any living man. On the occasion of our visit, he, on seeing us approaching, came to meet us at the door—an old gentleman in dressing-gown, slippers, and

spectacles, with a pipe in his mouth, which he barely troubled to remove, replacing it as soon as the preliminary exchange of greetings had taken place. The first room we entered was lined all round from floor to ceiling with shelves, and each shelf was filled with skulls. In amazement we looked around us, for no one had prepared us for such a sight.

"How many skulls have you?" I asked in astonishment.

"There are eight hundred in this room," replied M. Peredolsky; and then, turning to a shelf on which there were ten, he added: "All in this row date from the glacial period; I excavated them from graves near the point where the Volkhoff flows out of Lake Ilmen. They were once beneath a glacier, embedded in a layer of lime four yards in depth." He took a skull in his hands as he spoke and proceeded to draw our attention to its peculiarities. The temples were extremely narrow, and the jaws protruded.

"Here are some distinct traces of cannibalism," continued our host, as he led us into another room to look at some bones and skulls found together in the bed of the river Volkhoff. "If you look closely enough at this skull you will see that human hands have been at work here trying to extract the brains, and, if my surmise is correct, the bones found with it show signs of having been gnawed by human teeth." He then informed us that most of the bones in his collection belonged to the palæolithic age, and were found within, or close to, the boundaries of the old town of Novgorod.

"These," said M. Peredolsky, "are ancestors of the Russian race. Along with them I found implements of smoked topaz, jasper, cornelians and mica, also fragments of asbestos and amianthus; all must have come from the Altai Mountains. When these skulls have been properly measured, and when their measurements have been compared with the measurements of skulls found in similar graves in Western Europe, much light will be thrown on

the history of the Slav race, and we shall know for a certainty where all its branches settled. I have myself measured every skull in this collection."

Another room was devoted to implements of the neolithic age. Here we found a number of small boomerangs. M. Peredolsky informed us that these were a counterpart of the boomerangs with which Edward Taylor had seen Australian children practising. The peculiarity of the boomerang is that it returns to the thrower of its own accord. Some have been found in Siberia that are more than a yard in length. The art of making them has been preserved, but why they should return to the thrower seems never to have been satisfactorily explained. They were used in war and in hunting. Our attention was next drawn to a number of peculiarly chipped stones, which seem to have been used for drilling holes in the ice on rivers and lakes in order to get at the fish below, and near these we found a collection of flints for striking fire, like those dug up in Kent.

We now came to a suite of rooms leading one into the other where M. Peredolsky had placed a miscellaneous collection of antiquities not yet classified. Amongst other objects of interest were burial urns with ashes still inside them, from the neighbouring tumuli, exactly similar to urns found in tumuli in the north of Scandinavia.

"Here is a peculiar kind of fat, or oil, lamp," said M. Peredolsky, and he showed us a small pitcher with one curling ear. "I found several of these at a depth of ten yards below the sea-level; they are made of steatite, or soapstone; they are unique, for nothing like them is to be seen in any other museum in the world."

We next examined some ancient crucibles for melting metals, and then turned to look at what were, to us, of special interest—some blocks of stone on the sides of which human features had been roughly chiselled; these were fetiches. The idolaters first worshipped mountains, and

when their prayers seemed to be answered they hewed stones from those mountains for the building of their houses and walls in preference to getting them elsewhere. The fetiches in question were found in the walls of the ancient fortress of Novgorod, and must have been brought from a great distance. A similar custom has been found among certain tribes in Central Africa. A collection of backbones of large fish, such as the silurius, next claimed our attention. M. Peredolsky considers that their presence in the bed of Lake Ilmen proves that the climate was once much milder than it has been during the last four thousand years. We found, also, a horn of a *cervus elaphus*; part of a mammoth's skull; the upper part of the skull of an enormous flat-faced bull, upon which could be distinctly traced the marks of a death blow received from some heavy weapon having a rough surface; and a number of other bones which M. Peredolsky, after careful measuring, had labelled as those of the elk, wolf, wild boar, bear, and many smaller wild animals. Strange to say, in all his excavations he had not come across a single dog's tooth, or bone of a horse; the only trace of the latter animal that had turned up was one very large tooth. There was also a collection of bones of mammoths and other extinct animals, which had been found close to a rude hearth filled with charcoal and ashes, a proof that man must have been acquainted with fire in the earliest stages of his existence. In another spot, with more mammoth bones in a stratum of sand, M. Peredolsky had discovered a second hearth, formed by the placing together of a number of blocks of sandstone. Scattered round it, he had found a large number of fragments of clay vessels, made of five distinct kinds of clay. The fragments were embellished with ornamental designs, some of them showing considerable taste; these, it was clear, had been made with the aid of a potter's wheel; we saw others, however, which had evidently been modelled and completed by the hand alone; these last had been found in the muddy bed of the river Volkhoff. The fact that ornamented vessels

of clay have been found amongst palæolithic remains, seems to indicate that clay was used in the making of pottery at a much earlier date than some archæologists have supposed.

After we had spent three hours in moving from one object of antiquity to another we were reluctantly taking our leave of this fascinating museum, when M. Peredolsky induced us to delay our departure a little longer, in order to inspect a collection of ancient stones, upon which writing was clearly visible. "These are all from the shores of Lake Ilmen," he said; "it is of the utmost importance in the investigation of Russian history, from prehistoric times up to the introduction of Christianity, that attention should be paid to such fragments of ancient writing; they date back to a time prior to the use of verbs; we are just now comparing them with the Runic inscriptions found on stones in the government of Tver. Here, you see, are notches indicating price; similar signs have been found on stones in Scandinavia. The custom of conveying a meaning by means of notches on sticks and stones was widely spread, not only among the tribes dwelling on the shores of Lake Ilmen—of this we have abundant proof—but also among those who inhabited the shores of Lake Ladoga and the shores of the Gulf of Finland. The notched stones found here should be compared with similar ones that have been discovered in Siberia. I have already done something in this direction, and have found that three of my notched stones are hardly to be distinguished from others excavated in the neighbourhood of Irkutsk."

It is well known that the tribes who inhabited the shores of Lake Ilmen used, from time immemorial, to make use of prepared skins. The Russian word for these is *skuroi* —phonetically the same word as *skoroi*—the word used to designate the old laws for foreign merchants trading with Novgorod and in Novgorod. *Skoroe Novogorodskia* were laws written upon carefully prepared skins. M. Peredolsky believes that this points to the fact that the

word was borrowed from the people of Novgorod in the first instance.*

Russian archæologists tell us that the first church built in Russia after the introduction of Christianity was the cathedral of St. Sophia at Novgorod. The present edifice, containing the tombs of Vladimir, Yaroslavitch, and Mstislav the Brave, has been repaired so many times that it is not always easy to distinguish the old from the new; yet we know that what remains of the original church has lasted for more than eight hundred and fifty years, having escaped the devastating hand of both Tatar and Swede. When we remember how scanty are the relics of the past in Russia, we are able to sympathise with the feelings of those who "can hardly refrain from tears" in relating the devastations that have been caused in recent years by ignorant workmen. The most ancient walls in Russia have been ruthlessly pierced to make way for modern stoves; coffins found between slabs of stone have been broken open and their contents carted away as rubbish. The most remarkable thing about this church is the fact that numerous urns have been discovered cemented into the upper parts of its walls; these lie horizontally with their mouths towards the interior of the church. Until quite recently it was believed that they had been built into the walls to improve their acoustic properties by receiving and collecting sound, and they were called, in consequence, *golosniks*, or voice carriers. There are fifty of these in the walls of St. Sophia at the present day, and many more have been destroyed by workmen engaged in repairing the walls. One other edifice, the Znamensky Cathedral, has twelve such urns in its walls; but besides these and remnants of similar vessels discovered among the ruins of old churches in the neighbourhood, I know of nothing else of the kind. M. Peredolsky is of the opinion

* We read, however, in "Hansa Towns," by H. Zimmern (1889) that "There is happily preserved for us a codex of the German colony on the Lake of Ilmen. It is called the *Skra*, an old German word which we encounter elsewhere in Hanseatic churches."

Cathedral of St. Sophia at Novgorod.

The Znamensky Cathedral, Novgorod.

[*To face page* 124

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

that the so-called *golosniks* have nothing whatever to do with the acoustics, but are burial urns, which once contained the ashes of Slavs who lived in Novgorod before the introduction of Christianity. All the vessels seem to be of one size and shape, similar to those found in Scandinavian tombs. Some of the *golosniks* in the crumbling walls of the Novgorod churches still contain a few ashes, and, according to M. Peredolsky's theory, they were cemented into the church walls by the earliest converts to Christianity, they being desirous that the remains of their ancestors who died without baptism might be hallowed by the prayers of the priests and congregation ascending from the body of the church. M. Peredolsky thinks it probable that rich people paid large sums for the privilege of placing the ashes of their relatives in the higher parts, while poorer people paid less, and secured, in consequence, the less favourable positions, and those who could afford still less had to content themselves with the right of burying their ancestors beneath the pavement of the church. The present floor of St. Sophia's dates from the eleventh century. Beneath this have been discovered human bones and skulls, very much broken up, and showing signs of having been at some former period exposed to the effects of air and damp; it was clear from their condition when found that their interment beneath the church floor was not their first burial. According to some of the earliest church documents, the greater part of the churches and monasteries of Novgorod were built over the graves of their pagan ancestors by converts to the Christian faith. The custom of placing pitchers or urns in church walls is not, I think, traceable in any other part of Europe, and to study it one must visit Novgorod.*

The rounded vault of the central cupola of St. Sophia's is ornamented with a fresco painting, which represents the

* If any reader of these pages can point to the discovery of *golosniks* in church walls elsewhere than in Novgorod I shall be glad to receive information concerning them.

head, shoulders and hands of Christ. The right hand is tightly closed, and not held out in the act of benediction, as it usually is in Greek pictures. Words, supposed to be issuing from the mouth of Christ, are written round the fresco in Slavonic characters: "So long as this hand remains closed over Novgorod the Great, so long shall the city continue to exist; but when it opens Novgorod shall cease to be."

But older still than St. Sophia's is the remnant still to be seen of the old fastness built by Rurik, for it dates back to the year 864. The walls that witnessed the founding of what is to-day the Russian Empire, that saw the gathering together for the first time of the *Vetche*—the ancient Russian Assembly—and have looked down upon the joys and sorrows of the Northern Slavs for century after century, are crumbling now beneath our eyes. The first reference to this fastness is in a document supposed to have been written in the year 1044. In the year 1862, just when the preparations for the unveiling of the beautiful monument commemorating the completion of a thousand years of Russian history were in full swing, a large portion of the wall of the fastness fell from sheer decay. The government had the fallen part rebuilt, and established at the same time a fund to meet the annual cost of preserving the walls and bastions of this precious relic from further deterioration; a thousand roubles have since been employed yearly in this work. The local Archæological Society, started in 1898, is actively engaged in investigation of the underground ruins within the area of the old town. They have already succeeded in locating many of the buildings mentioned in connection with historical events, such, for instance, as the Yaroslav Palace, once occupied, according to the early records, by Yaroslav the Brave, the son of Vladimir.

After the cathedral of St. Sophia, the next building in point of age is the Znamensky cathedral. The chief peculiarity of this edifice, which was erected in 1362, is that its exterior, as well as its interior, is adorned with frescoes. The tiresome sameness of white walls and green roofs

which meets the eye in every town in Russia is not repeated in the exterior of the Znamensky cathedral, the appearance of which is as attractive from without as from within. Its frescoes are more than six hundred years old. Those of the interior represent the scenes of the Last Judgment. Above the windows, and in other parts of the walls, I counted the twelve *golosniks* before referred to. Above the large picture representing the town being besieged, hangs an ikon of the Virgin Mary. That ikon was shown to us as the very one which, displayed on the wall when a besieging enemy was gaining ground, miraculously saved the town by turning the tide of victory in favour of the defenders of Novgorod.

Outside St. Sophia's we noticed several pyramidal heaps of stone balls, each nearly a foot in diameter; there was also a collection of them in the museum; their only use, according to M. Peredolsky, was to ornament the town walls in the days when Novgorod the Great was at the height of its magnificence and splendour.

In the museum founded by M. Mosoloff, and opened in 1892, were specimens of the earliest vessels consecrated for use in the churches. It was there, too, that we saw a collection of weapons and helmets dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries; the size and weight of the helmets was such that no human being of the present day could possibly wear them. Amongst the weapons were long spears, with which the monks used to defend their monasteries. In a wonderfully preserved wooden coffin, formed from the trunk of a tree and resembling those found in Denmark, there was an elegant little woman's slipper coquettishly pointed at the toe, and neither longer nor shorter than those now worn by European ladies. Why, then, were the helmets of the men so enormous? But to continue our round,—anyone who wishes to study the growth and development of the cannon should visit the museum at Novgorod; we found here tiny cannons*

* Several writers have affirmed that cannons were used in war before the middle of the fourteenth century.

that seemed only fit for children to play with, and muskets in every stage of development, many of them on wooden rests.* There was also a collection of caps, exquisitely embroidered in gold and pearls, which once adorned the heads of proud boyars. Here, too, were handsome vessels of brass, with two spouts, similar to those shown to visitors in the museum of the Hanseatic League at Bergen. Here let me remind the reader that, in the year 1495, this famous alliance of commercial cities had its most sumptuous offices in Novgorod the Great.† It included at that time no less than seventy German towns. The chief building in the Hanseatic colony at Novgorod was the church of St. Peter. This edifice was used, not only as a place of Divine service, but also as the chief warehouse of the League; the merchants used regularly to deposit in her vaults the goods they had brought with them from Germany; here, too, were stored the raw products received in exchange from the Russians, until such time as they could be forwarded to Western Europe. Even the interior of the sacred edifice had to make itself useful to the interests of commerce; here stood all the weighing machines; arranged around the walls stood bales and packages; the casks of wine had actually a special place of honour—near the altar. But the crime of laying goods upon the altar was severely punished by a fine of one silver mark. No one was allowed to enter the church with a light, and if the man left on duty as night watchman was caught asleep with his light burning, he too was fined a mark. There was a rule that packages and casks must be brought into the church very carefully, so that neither the doors nor the floor might be scratched. The court in which the church stood was surrounded by a wall of planks with a strong door, and guarded by watchmen day and night. It was forbidden to carry the key in such a manner that it could be seen; to make matters still more secure dogs were let loose in the court at night. Russian mer-

* Rests did not become obsolete in England till the reign of Charles I.

† See Riesenkampf, "Der Deutsche Hof zu Novgorod."

chants sometimes tried to cheat by putting worthless skins into their bales, and German merchants in their turn would sometimes cut a piece out of the middle of a roll of cloth before selling it to the Russians. The Hanseatic League never allowed its merchants to sell goods retail in Russia. At one period they were forbidden by the Novgorodians to import salt, because it was being produced at Staria Russa, and on the shores of the White Sea. In those days an enormous amount of wax candles were used in the churches of Western Europe, and most of the wax employed in making them came from Russia; the Hanseatic merchants had a huge cauldron at Novgorod for melting down the wax brought to them by the Novgorodians. Wild bees made their honeycombs in the hollow trunks of old trees in the northern forests, and wax was very plentiful.* The League made a great deal of money by their Russian trade and guarded their interests so jealously that they would not allow Germans outside their body to learn Russian. When the Lombards tried to get a footing at Novgorod, the Hanseatics succeeded, in 1405, in prohibiting "these dangerous men" from transacting any business in the Baltic cities. But their own day of prosperity was not to last. In the year 1402 Ivan III. caused much disquietude among the Livonians by building a strong brick fortress with high towers opposite the town of Narva. A few months after the completion of this fortress, which was called Ivangorod, a Russian was put to death by the Livonians at Reval, convicted of some dreadful crime. The citizens of Reval taunted the Russians on that occasion, saying: "We would do as much to your grand prince, if he deserved it."

* "There are often tymes founde great masses of Honey combes, conserved in trees of the olde Honey, forsaken of bees, forasmuche as the husbandmen can not seeke out every tree in so great and large woodds; insomuch that in the stockes or bodies of exceedyng great and hollow trees are sometymes founde great pooles or lakes of Honey." From Richarde Eden's translation of Herberstein, printed in 1555. Herberstein tells also of a countryman who got into one of these hollow trees by chance, "into the which he slypt up to the breast, and lyed there only with Honey for the space of two days, calling in vaine for help in that desart of woodds." He got out eventually by clutching at a bear that descended into the hollow tree after the honey.

These words were repeated to Ivan, and he at once determined to have his revenge upon the people of Reval, who, not content with taunts, had begun to ill-use the merchants of Novgorod who happened to be within their walls. Ivan demanded that the magistrates of Reval should be handed over to him for punishment, but meeting with a refusal he ordered all the Hanseatic merchants at Novgorod to be arrested. There were forty-nine of them. The German market, the German shops, and the German church were closed and sealed; their merchandise, to the value of a million florins, was confiscated and sent to Moscow, and the unfortunate merchants were put in irons. News of this unheard-of outrage spread like wildfire through the whole of Germany. Until now the greatest respect had been shown by the people of Novgorod to every merchant of the League; for these had furnished them, not only with such things as cloth from Flanders, and the productions of German manufactories, but also with many commodities for daily consumption. The League sent ambassadors to Moscow to plead their cause with Ivan, and demand the liberation of their merchants. But Ivan was not to be moved; he kept the merchants in prison for a whole year. When at last he decided to restore them to liberty it was found that many of them had died in their chains. Thus disappeared at Novgorod the commerce of the Hanseatic towns, the one source of riches and civilisation, the one link between Russia and Europe during the long years in which that country was plunged in the gloom of Mongol barbarism. The commerce thus lost passed to Riga, Dorpat and Reval, and thence to Narva, whither the Russians had to turn in future whenever they wished to exchange the productions of their soil for foreign merchandise. Ivan saw his mistake when it was too late. He had cut himself off from the civilisation of Europe.*

* "Drei Jahrhunderte lang besass die Hanse allein den auswärtigen Verkehr des nördlichen Russlands. Fragt man nun, welchen Schaden oder Nützen sie dem Lande gebracht, so ist es freilich nicht zu laugnen, dass Novgorod und Pleskow durch sie allen selbständigen Handel mit dem Westen verloren. Russland gerieth —was seine Kulturbedürfnisse anbelangt—in die vollständigste Abhängigkeit, und

As we wandered through the museum we were enabled to picture, if but faintly, the life of the nobles and merchants when Novgorod the Great was at the zenith of its pride and power. We saw the brocaded silks worn by the ladies; the little brass ink-pots, one of which was carried on a chain round his neck by every merchant; the handsome jewellery and the silver coins. Here, too, we saw window-panes of mica, once regularly used instead of glass. Plate-glass was rare, even in the reign of Catherine II.; here was a mirror of plate-glass made especially for the boudoir of that Empress, and thought a wonder in its time; it consisted of two pieces of glass put together. We also found a collection of money, dating from the tenth century; a stick of silver called a *grivna* represented a couple of roubles; if one rouble was wanted the stick had merely to be broken in half. The first properly made coins in Russia were the work of an Italian from Milan, whom Ivan III. induced to settle in Moscow for that purpose. In the sixteenth century copper and silver money was coined at Moscow, Tver, Pskoff and Novgorod. The *denga* of Novgorod represented the grand prince seated in an armchair and a subject bowing low before him. A Novgorod rouble was worth a hundred and forty *dengas*. There was then no gold in circulation except that brought into the country by foreigners. Every jeweller had the right to coin money and to circulate it, but the weight and quality of all the coin was regularly tested by government inspectors. During the minority of Ivan IV., in 1538, it was determined that a pound of silver should produce six roubles; where this law was transgressed the hands of the offender were cut off in punishment of the crime; before that date some jewellers had managed to get as many as ten roubles out of a pound of silver. The smallest coin in Russian coinage is the kopeck, valuing a hundredth part of a rouble; its

war der Willkühr und dem schonungslosen Egoismus des Deutschen Kaufmanne ausgesetzt; doch, man muss bedenken, dass, ohne die Hanse, Russland vielleich gar keinen Verkehr mit dem Westen gehabt hätte." See Riesenkampf, "De Deutsche Hof zu Novgorod," 1854.

name is derived from the word *kopeika*, meaning a lance, because the coin represented the grand prince holding a lance or pike in his right hand.

After leaving the museum we picked our way through much mud to a little chapel built inside the wall of the old fortress, over a spring of pure water. An old woman presides over a well in front of the altar and lets a bucket down when pilgrims come to drink and pray; for this they pay her a trifle. At the back of the chapel is a small door leading into a tiny living-room, the old woman's home, which we found furnished like the isba of a humble peasant; the bed was an eighteen-inch board running round the wall. The proprietress of this strange little nest was in the act of removing some steaming potatoes from a saucepan to a plate for her lunch; she at once invited us to share her repast, and on our declining, left the potatoes to cool while she drew us some of the consecrated water. Having lighted a taper, she attached it to the bucket and bade us watch the glimmering light descend into the well. We had not sufficient confidence in its purity to try the water brought up for our benefit, but some pilgrims who had just arrived were glad to secure it. At one corner of her little nest the old lady had arranged a stall with bead purses and other trifles for sale. These had been supplied to her by the nuns in the neighbouring convents, whose spare time is occupied in working them.

The country round Novgorod contains an extraordinary number of monasteries and convents; so massively are some of them built that they look at the distance of a few miles like huge barracks or asylums. A convent for women particularly attracted our attention; it looked capable of sheltering more than a thousand inmates. Having seated ourselves in a droshky, we ordered our *isvoschik* to drive us thither, but that worthy refused point-blank.

"You don't know what you are asking," he added, "the mud between Novgorod and that convent is quite impassable. The nuns themselves can only get into town

at certain seasons of the year, when there has been no rain for weeks."

"Well, then," I replied, "perhaps you can drive us to the Hutinsky monastery instead?" This time the man made no objection; there was a road paved with rough stones all the way, and though it would be muddy enough there too, he was ready to take us if we would pay him well for his trouble. So we started, and reached our destination after a drive of ten versts—about eight miles. Near the entrance to the group of buildings which composed the monastery, in the centre of which was a large church, we found a few straggling isbas occupied by peasant families, whose ancestors were probably the serfs of the monastery. All the buildings were whitewashed, and the cupola of the church was a brilliant blue. A fat, dirty-looking monk, with long dishevelled hair, took us into the church and showed us the shrine of the saint whose piety and miracles made the monastery famous seven hundred years ago and have been its glory ever since. The head, cap, beard and hands of the reclining saint, whose name was Varlaam, were represented in shining brass. Round the head was a wreath of freshly-made paper roses, white, pink, and red. Above him was a canopy with massive curtains of brass; the coffin containing his mortal remains was covered with silver; scenes from his life, in beautiful bas-relief, adorned its sides. On the wall was a large picture representing a fearful scene—the tomb of Valaam opening and flames of fire bursting forth. When Ivan the Terrible came to kneel at Varlaam's tomb after the massacre at Novgorod, it opened thus, and flames licked the ground, making the terrified Czar fly for his life. Ivan was represented as dropping his sceptre in terror, but several monks, who were kneeling close to the tomb were continuing their devotions as if unconscious of what was taking place; the flames did not touch them. Our guide took us into the sacristy and showed us the identical sceptre, split by the violence of its fall upon the stone floor. We also saw and felt the heavy horsehair shirt which Varlaam was in the

habit of wearing next his skin, concealed by his monastic robes; it had long sleeves, and was half an inch thick. Some of Varlaam's handwriting has also been preserved.

Historians tell us that there were several years of famine in the middle of the sixteenth century, when the people of Novgorod suffered greatly for want of snow. In the vestibule of the Hutinsky church we found a fresco representing Varlaam's most famous miracle. The saint, through his prayers, brought snow to Novgorod in June, thus averting the famine for that year. He sits in a sleigh drawn by two prancing horses, and a monk stands on the footboard behind. The scenery is that of midsummer; the trees are in full leaf, and flowers are springing up on the roadside; but, marvellous to relate, flakes of snow are descending from the sky; the leafy boughs are whitening under its fall, and the sleigh glides over deepening snow. Afterwards we ascended by many steps to the summit of a hillock within the convent grounds, where a little enclosure with an iron cross marks the spot on which Varlaam offered up his prayers for snow.

We heard other stories about Varlaam before we left Novgorod. On one occasion he wished a saint from one of the other monasteries to come and see him, and, as the mud was too deep just then for man or beast, he prayed for snow, in order that his friend might come in a sleigh. Snow fell and friend came, but when he got there he rebuked Varlaam for spoiling the harvest, and warned him gravely against abusing the power of prayer. On another occasion, when the monks in a neighbouring convent were in want of a hatchet and could not get into town on account of the state of the roads, Varlaam threw them one, and they got it safely, though they were some five miles away.

"From what class of society are all these monasteries and convents supplied?" I asked of a resident in Novgorod on our return thither.

"From the peasant class," was the reply. "The lazy good-for-nothings from all the country round, who abhor

manly labour and love idleness, *they* are the men who fill the monasteries. I except, of course, the few rare souls who have an eye to promotion, and embrace the monastic life in order to become, if not archimandrites, at least high dignitaries of the church. The women who fill our convents are of rather a better class, and generally superior; they always employ their time in some useful occupation; those in the convent which you were prevented by the mud from visiting come into the town and nurse the sick."

I have compared Novgorod the Great, at the time of its splendour and prosperity, with Nüremberg at the same period, because, within a few weeks of my visit to the former and while the traces of mediæval grandeur which its museums had disclosed to me were still fresh in my memory, I had the good fortune to find myself in the latter, where every object of interest carried me again to the period I had been studying in Russia. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the Republic of Novgorod was far greater and more powerful than any German town has ever been. It was a democratic state. Even Karamsin, whose writings N. Turguenieff called, "one long defence of despotism," was proud to compare Novgorod the Great with Athens and Sparta, with Unterwalden and Glaris. The people of Novgorod elected their own rulers, made their own wars, and administered their own justice. The *posadniks* and the magistrates were at the same time the commanders of the forces. The soul, the essence of this Republic, lay in its citizen families of the first rank; they were its bravest soldiers, its born defenders. They were the class whence sprang the boyars—the citizens who distinguished themselves by their faithful service to the Republic. After these came the merchants, useful to the Republic by their commercial enterprises, but with tastes less warlike. Then came a third class, composed of poor, but free citizens, and in this class was included the proletariat. In the latter days of the Republic there arose another class, between the merchants and the people; each had its particular privileges. The *posadniks* were

always boyars, and the greater part of the officials were also elected from the highest class; none were ever elected from the lowest. Every class took part equally in the elections. The archbishops, also chosen by the voice of the people, were amongst the most patriotic of the citizens; they would offer their private resources for the building of its walls, towers, or bridges. They even sent a regiment to the war; it went by the name of "The Archbishop's Regiment." These zealous prelates would even brave, in the cause of Novgorod, the wrath of the Metropolitan at Moscow. As for the citizens, so high was their standard of honour, that, instead of taking an oath, they had only to say, "I give the word of a citizen of Novgorod."

Some historians attribute the fall of Novgorod the Great to her riches and her prosperity. As her wealth increased her martial spirit decreased, till at length she fell so low as to buy back from the enemy, with her gold, the prisoners for whose ransom her citizens would have willingly shed their life blood in earlier days. In the reign of Ivan III. the lion had already become a lamb. As time wore on, it was evident that Ivan could not call himself monarch of all the Russias, so long as Novgorod and Pskoff remained democratic states; their ambition clashed with his, and one or the other had to give in at last; but Novgorod might have enjoyed her liberty, perhaps for centuries longer, if she had not been divided against herself. It was, as far as we can gather, the appeal of one class of her citizens to Ivàn to defend them against another, which hastened her fall, and gave a semblance of plausibility to Ivan's subsequent actions. In 1481 he caused many of her leading nobles to be arrested, tortured into the confession of crimes they had never committed, and finally put to death. The richest merchants were transported with their families from Novgorod to Vladimir, to Nijni Novgorod, Rostoff and Kostroma, their lands being given to Muscovite merchants. Novgorod soon had the appearance of a body bereft of its soul. It was left to Ivan the Terrible, however,

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The Archbishop of Novgorod.

[*To face page* 136.

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to complete her destruction. We are told that in the year 1569 a certain vagabond named Peter, who had received at Novgorod the punishment merited by his crimes, resolved to have his revenge upon its inhabitants. Knowing that the state of Ivan's feelings towards Novgorod was anything but friendly, he forged a letter, addressed in the name of the archbishop and citizens, to the King of Poland, proposing a secret treaty. This letter he hid behind an ikon of the Virgin Mary in the cathedral of St. Sophia, after which he fled to Moscow, and declared in the presence of the Czar that Novgorod was betraying Russia to Poland. In order that this accusation might be proved, a confidential messenger was sent to Novgorod to look for the letter. When it had been discovered in the spot indicated by Peter, Ivan considered it ample proof of the guilt of the Republic, and began at once to prepare for the reduction of the town. He set out for Novgorod, accompanied by his courtiers and his favourite legion, in the month of December, 1569. The soldiers were allowed to pillage all the towns they passed on their way. On entering Novgorod Ivan was met by the archbishop, who, ignorant of the Czar's cruel design, was waiting upon the bridge to give him his benediction. Ivan angrily refused to receive him, and made his way to St. Sophia's. After attending divine service, he sat down to a banquet that had been prepared for him at the episcopal palace. In the middle of the repast he made a sign to some of his people, and immediately the archbishop, his officers and servants, were arrested. Now began the most terrible massacre and pillage in the history of Russia. Even St. Sophia's did not escape; its treasures, its pictures, and its bells were taken. All the other churches and all the rich monasteries were sacked. A thousand of the citizens were seized and tortured to death. Hundreds of unfortunate men, women and children were thrown into the river Volkhoff, and pierced with lances if their bodies did not sink. Some writers say that the massacre lasted five weeks. Ivan is said to have walked about in the streets watching his greedy soldiers

ransack the houses and shops, break open doors, and scale walls in search of loot. According to Karamsin, fifteen thousand Novgorodians were put to death in one day, and the annalists of Pskoff tell us that before the carnage ceased sixty thousand men, women and children had been slaughtered.

But enough of the past. Let us dwell for a moment on the state of Novgorod as we find it in the twentieth century. Our hotel is in the chief street, and I take a look at its houses from our balcony; they are all low, and the great width of the street makes them look even lower than they are in reality. Every house has its own particular hue. One is pink, with a green roof; the next is buff, with cinnamon cornices and window-frames; the next to that is painted a dark chocolate colour; and is followed by a house of pale blue, with an apple-green roof. After that comes a whitewashed church, with the usual green roof, surmounted by a golden cupola. Over the portico of our hotel is written in large Russian characters: "The Traveller's Rest." We are charged the modest sum of one rouble and a half for a large bedroom with two beds and screen. All the servants are men and boys. The only woman employed in the hotel is a young lady, who presides at the bar. Liqueur glasses are provided when we ask for egg-cups, but we do not require them, as the eggs are not eatable. As we sit on the balcony after dinner we see two demure little girls accompanying their mamma for an evening walk. They look very German, with their yellow pigtails, white hats with pink ribbons, and light-blue parasols; the parasols must surely be carried for effect, for the sun has set an hour ago. They are followed by a priest in flowing robes, broad-brimmed hat, and long curly hair; he has a tiny boy by the hand. Now come a couple of officers in smart uniform, evidently belonging to one of the regiments stationed in the town. No one is in a hurry; all are enjoying the mild evening after a hot day.

The government of Novgorod is nine hundred versts long by three hundred broad. The country is covered in

many places with thick forests; in the open parts there are numerous tumuli which archæologists have yet to explore. Bears are still to be found in the forests. Several large estates belonging to noblemen are intact, but most of them have been parcelled out into small farms. The houses in which the former proprietors resided have been pulled down, and their owners have gone to reside in Moscow or St. Petersburg. One of the few large estates left has an important wood-sawing business. The whole of its premises are lit with electric light; even its pig-sties are thus illuminated.

So much for Novgorod of to-day.

CHAPTER XI.

STARIA RUSSA.

The sanatorium—One of the oldest towns in Russia—Salt works—An old process—Twig walls—A Christian church—Palaces of wood—A Russian heroine—The fate of Marfa's sons—At the railway station—A gigantic stove.

We left Novgorod at six o'clock in the evening, having chosen the quickest train between that town and Staria Russa. Travelling at the rate of eight miles an hour and changing trains at Chudoff, where a hearty supper was waiting for the first and second class passengers, at the cost of sixpence a head, we reached Staria Russa at eleven, and drove at once to the sanatorium—a large and handsome building, surrounded by its own pleasure grounds and a park. The original building was opened at the suggestion of Dr. Rauch in the year 1828. The pump-room and baths are connected with alkaline springs, the water from which has proved a valuable agent in the cure of scrofulous diseases, rickets, rheumatism and gout. The sanatorium is one of the most fashionable of its kind in Russia, and frequented by the well-to-do from every part of the Empire. In the height of the season—which is necessarily a very short one on account of the brevity of the northern summer—there is a considerable display of dress and fashion. The prices are quite as high, if not higher, than those of the more fashionable hotels in such places as Interlaken or Lucerne. The sanatorium opens on the 15th of June and closes on the 1st of September.

Staria Russa is one of the oldest towns in Russia; ancient annals tell us that it was founded by Russ before the year

862; its river Polista is too dirty for drinking purposes, so the town gets its water supply from underground wells two versts distant; a canal, constructed for the purpose, brings the water into the town. Salt works have been carried on in the neighbourhood for many centuries. Until the year 1824 all the distilleries were in the hands of private persons, but since that date the government has claimed a fixed sum annually for the right of distilling. One of the salt works was started by order of Catherine II., for the benefit of the crown, but as its profits were very small it was closed in 1857. Most of the private distilleries have also been closed; cheaper and better methods started in the salt districts of south Russia have completely "cut out" those of Staria Russa; we found only one in working order when we drove out to visit them.

Entering a rough shed we saw a huge brick oven under a vat. A fire roared in the oven and a boy was engaged in feeding it with wood from a pile of logs close by. The fire had to be kept red-hot for three days and three nights in succession. The top of the vat was hidden in a cloud of steam. We were taken up a wooden ladder to a balcony that ran round the vat, and, looking down upon the seething water, could see the extraneous matter floating on its surface. A pump, worked below, forces the water from the neighbouring building through a pipe into the vat; a second vat adjoining the first receives the distilled water. Entering the lofty shed from which the water came we examined two gigantic walls composed of twigs set close together—some twenty-four feet high; these walls were like great brushes set back to back with a roof over them. By means of a pump worked by steam in a covered shed close by, the water from the wells below was pumped up to the roof above the twig walls, in pipes, and then allowed to trickle down through the twigs to a trough below; by this process it was cleared of its mud; we could see that the twigs were thickly coated with fine mud left by the water as it passed through them. The twig walls were forty yards in length, and about half-way up a wooden

balcony ran round them. The well was very deep, and the pipe which brought the water to the surface was a yard in diameter. Many small stones were thrown up with the water. A building such as I have described, with twig walls, is called a *gradēla*, from the verb *gradērovat*—to distil.

As we drove back to the town we saw that every isba in the village through which we passed had bright geraniums in its windows. On entering the chief street of Staria Russa we came upon an old woman selling war news; she was leaning upon a stick, and, though her head was carefully covered with a handkerchief, her dress, reaching hardly below the knees, left a pair of aged limbs exposed to mud and rain. The sight was typical; it reminded me of a remark made by a Russian friend: "Our women always tie up their heads, no matter what happens to their feet."*

Strolling about the pleasant grounds of the sanatorium in the afternoon, we looked through the hoardings at a beautiful fountain just then under repair. Close by, within the park, was a pretty wooden theatre bearing the date 1883. A little further off we came upon a dairy-farm where visitors to the sanatorium could always get a glass of fresh milk when they felt inclined. We also visited a handsome concert hall adjoining the sanatorium, where the band played in wet weather and where good concerts were given during the season; the band plays twice a day in the open air when the weather is fine. Near the concert hall is a building which contains hot and cold baths in connection with the treatment.

Driving through the town later in the day we passed a large church, square in shape, with a campanile beside it.

"Is that a Catholic church?" I asked of our driver, for a separate campanila is not usual in modern Byzantine edifices.

* This custom is by no means confined to the women; we used to amuse ourselves by counting the men and boys in the streets of St. Petersburg who had their heads wrapped up, even in warm weather, as if for mumps or toothache.

"No, indeed!" he cried in a tone of horror. "It is a *Christian* church!"

Staria Russa has several very long unpaved streets lined with wooden houses closely adjoining one another, but always detached, and usually two or three storeys high. The slanting roofs are brightly painted in various colours, and I noticed one picked out in squares of black and red, like a chess-board. As all the roofs are covered with snow during the winter it is only in summer that they can be distinguished from one another. It would be nothing very serious for whole streets of such houses to be burnt down; they cost so little to build, and can easily be replaced in a few weeks. The reason why there is so little that can be called old in Russia is that for centuries the nation constructed all its buildings, public and private, of wood. An old painting of the town of Moscow, which is still preserved, shows the houses as wooden and detached. Keeping all this in mind we are less affected by notices in the annals that Staria Russa was more than once burned to the ground during the struggles of Novgorod to retain her ancient freedom. In studying the early history of Russia I have frequently come across the name of Staria Russa; it was there that Dmitri, a son of Marfa Boretsky, was beheaded for having taken part in a rising of the citizens of Novgorod. Russian children still read tales about Marfa Boretsky; her only fault seems to have been too great a love of freedom and too sincere a love for the Republic; though some say that she was a seditious leader of the citizens, using her power over them for her own ends, and nourishing the hope that, by persuading them to ally themselves to the Lithuanians, she was preparing them to accept her as their queen, and a Lithuanian nobleman, whom she intended to marry, as their king. "Contrary," says Karamsin, "to the manners and customs of the Slav people, who forbade their women to take any part in public affairs, Marfa, the widow of the *posadnik*, Isaac Boretsky, a proud and ambitious woman, the mother of two grown-up sons, undertook to decide the

fate of her country." Gathering the influential citizens around her, Marfa told them that Ivan was their enemy, not their chief, and urged them to refuse to acknowledge him as "Grand Prince of Novgorod and all the Russias." After a prolonged struggle the partisans of Marfa were compelled to submit to Ivan, and at a gathering of their national assembly they took an oath of allegiance to that prince, who, in his turn, promised to forget all that had passed. Wishing to show his scorn for a woman who had mixed herself up with politics, he made not a single allusion to Marfa in his treaty of peace with Novgorod, and we are left in ignorance of her fate. An old portrait of her, which I found in M. Plushkin's museum at Pskoff, represents her as an elderly woman with a head-dress resembling that worn by Russian nuns in the present day. Perhaps Marfa, like so many of her compatriots, preferred ending her days in a convent to being banished from her home.

The first-class waiting-room at Staria Russa, where we spent an hour before the arrival of the train that was to carry us to Pskoff, was a fine room, well lighted and well warmed, with one of the largest of all the large stoves we had seen in Russia—of white porcelain with gold ornamentation; it measured eighteen feet in height and seven in breadth and protruded two feet into the room from the wall into which it was built.

CHAPTER XII.

PSKOFF.

Galoshes—No tourists—Ancient walls—Sister republics—The great bell—Fall of Pskoff—Speech of Vassili—Fate of the people—Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul—St. Nicholas—An ancient monastery—Rare frescoes—Opinion of connoisseurs—An old recipe for fresco painting—M. Plushkin's collection of curios—Coins—Historical trophies—The embarrassment of riches—Freemasons in Russia—A regiment of Amazons—A Russian orchestra—The first newspaper in Pskoff—Pskoff and America—Pogankini palace—A remarkable picture—Palæolithic remains—Buried treasure—A thrice-walled city—Poushkin's grandfather—Poushkin and Pskoff—School for Russian peasant—The mayor of Pskoff—Russian furniture—The pastor's wife.

As Staria Russa lies in the direct route from Moscow to Pskoff we were able to avail ourselves of one of the fast trains, and travelled to Pskoff at the comfortable rate of forty miles an hour. Every passenger, including ourselves and several small children, had on a pair of shining, well-made galoshes; we had bought ours in a shop in Staria Russa, at three shillings the pair, and found them superior to any we could have purchased in England at that price. The Russian and the galosh are inseparable, and will remain so till the streets of provincial towns are paved. The half-boots worn by our grandmothers in their girlhood were, in their day, equally indispensable in English country towns; for a description of the muddy state of our streets, and the importance of the half-boot, the reader has only to turn to such books as Miss Austen's "Emma." We left Staria Russa at three in the afternoon, and reached Pskoff at eight; from the station to the town we had a drive of some two miles. Trains for St. Petersburg entering Russia from the north-west all stop

at Pskoff for ten minutes. What traveller to Russia by that route does not remember seeing the word "Pskoff" written over a dreary station, halted at about five in the morning? We have all halted there, but how many of us have paid Pskoff a visit? Yet this town is full of interest for the archæologist and the antiquarian, for students of the development of Byzantine fresco painting, and for all who take an interest in Russia's early history. Pskoff used to call herself the younger sister of Novgorod the Great; she glories still in having been the birthplace of Olga. Six centuries before Moscow came into existence she was a flourishing republic. The wall of her kremlin, of which parts may still be seen, was built in 1138. In the year 1266 a second and larger rampart was built; a third, called the middle wall, dates from the year 1375. The wall round the town was put up in 1456.* When Stephen Batori was preparing to besiege Pskoff in 1580, his adjutant, who had ridden forward to reconnoitre, sent back to his commander in writing the following message: "We have reached this great town; it is equal to Paris in size, but with God's help we will conquer it." The adjutant was mistaken: Pskoff defended herself gallantly, and Stephen, after besieging her for twelve months, was obliged to abandon his design of reducing this thrice-walled city; he retired discomfited. During this siege the women of the town came out on to the ramparts and helped to draw up the cannons taken from the enemy: some of them brought water to the wounded, and others armed with spears fought side by side with their husbands and brothers.

Pskoff and Novgorod always had one archbishop between them, though when, in 1465, the Novgorodians refused to help the people of Pskoff against the Livonians, the Pskovians petitioned Ivan III. to let them have an archbishop of their own. Ivan, however, would not hear of

* "Plescow is the only city in all the Muscovites' dominions which is surrounded by a wall. It is divided into four parts, each of which is surrounded with its own wall. This has led some into the error of saying that it was surrounded with a quadruple wall." See Herberstein, transl. by Mayor, 1852.

it. The two republics formed in reality one power, and had there been fewer dissensions and jealousies between them, the Muscovite princes would have found it much harder to compel them to acknowledge their supremacy. Seeing the terrible fate that threatened Novgorod in the reign of Ivan IV.,* the Pskovians had reluctantly acknowledged that prince to be Czar of all the Russias, and they had even assisted him against their will in the reduction of Novgorod, but the evil day was only deferred by their humiliation.

Poor, like Novgorod in the productions of nature, Pskoff had succeeded in acquiring wealth by the activity of her commerce; her commercial relations with Germany by way of Livonia enabled her to introduce to her citizens the arts of civilisation. Her geographical position on the borders of Livonia resulted in constant tussles with the Knights of the Livonian Order, even after she had lost her independence as a republic; hence her warlike spirit was longer kept alive than that of her sister Novgorod. Karamsin tells us that Pskoff showed neither the insolence nor the cowardice of Novgorod, and that the citizens of Pskoff were distinguished for their prudence, their justice and their fidelity. As though she could foresee that Russia would one day become a single great power, Pskoff never once attempted to betray the cause of the grand princes; she made heroic efforts, however, to maintain the liberty of Novgorod, and generously pardoned the jealousy sometimes shown by the Novgorodians. The partiality of Karamsin may perhaps have been influenced by his sympathy with despotism, which he regarded much in the same light as did the Duke of Wellington, his contemporary. The laws and institutions of the two republics bore a close resemblance to one another, but the Pskovians had one class of citizens, peculiar to their own republic, who held a higher rank than either the merchants or the landowners; they, too, were called *posadniks*, but a *posadnik*

* The fall of Novgorod, which began during the reign of Ivan III., was completed by Ivan IV.

of Pskoff was a more important personage than a *posadnik* of Novgorod, and his title was a hereditary one. When Ivan III. took from Novgorod the rights of self-government which she had prized so highly, he treated Pskoff more leniently, allowing her to retain many of her ancient privileges. The sad fate of Novgorod had made the Pskovians tremble; yet they clung fondly to the hope that somehow or other they would escape a similar fate; they hoped, against hope, that Vassili would spare them, as his father had done before him, if only they showed themselves sufficiently humble. But in Pskoff, too, there were dissensions and jealousies, and when, in 1509, an appeal was made to Vassili to settle disputes which the citizens could not settle among themselves, that prince thought he had now a favourable opportunity for divesting the republic of her democratic rights. Vassili came to Novgorod in the autumn of the same year, and it was while he was there that, after granting an audience to the Pskovian boyars who had complaints to bring before him, he had them all arrested. A merchant of Pskoff, who happened to be in Novgorod at the time, carried home the portentous news. Terror seized the Pskovians. "Terror and sorrow parched our very throats," says their annalist; "our lips were speechless. Never before had we experienced such feelings of despair." The great bell was rung and the National Assembly was hurriedly called. Alas! the citizens knew that resistance would be mere self-destruction; they were not in a position to withstand a siege—there was nothing for it but to submit. A humble message was accordingly sent to Vassili, thanking him for all his former favours, and begging him to continue them. Vassili, in his turn, sent an ambassador to Pskoff with a message to the effect that if the citizens wished to retain his goodwill it could only be by dissolving once and for all their National Assembly, by taking down the bell which summoned the citizens to its meetings, and by receiving Vassili's lieutenants in all their towns. We are told that Vassili had long to wait for an answer, so choked

were the citizens with their sobs and tears. At last they begged for one more day and night in which to make up their minds. "Only the babes at the breast were insensible of our affliction during those terrible hours," says their annalist. "The streets and houses resounded with the groanings of the people. Friends embraced each other as if about to part for ever." It is true that for a long time past the Pskovians had been accustomed to consider the reigning grand prince of Moscovy as their supreme head, but till now these princes had respected their laws, the National Assembly had retained its legislative power, and the people had been able to elect their own representatives. The next day the great bell was heard for the last time; the citizens it called together knew, every man of them, that resistance was out of the question. They awaited in mournful silence the arrival of Vassili's ambassador. Then they made him a long speech, in which they declared that God and the Grand Prince were the masters of Pskoff, of her people, and of her bell.

On the 15th of January, 1510, the bell was taken down from its tower by the weeping citizens, who knew that with their bell they were losing their Constitution and their liberty. That very night the ambassador returned to Vassili, carrying with him the bell and the people's message. Vassili set out the next day for Pskoff, and the humbled citizens came out to greet his arrival. Vassili descended from his horse at a distance of two versts from the town, received the homage of the people, and walked with them in solemn procession to the church of the Trinity, where their bishop chanted a Te Deum. Turning to Vassili, at a pause in the divine service which followed, the bishop said: "Glory be to the Almighty, who has made you master of Pskoff without the shedding of blood." The people, once more unable to restrain their tears, cried out: "Prince, we are not strangers to you; we have always been faithful servants to yourself and to your ancestors before you."

Later in the day the principal citizens were summoned

to the great audience chamber, and there Vassili addressed them: "Illustrious Pskovians! Vassili Ivanovitch, by the grace of God, Czar and Sovereign of the whole of Russia, assures you of his favourable disposition towards you. Far from wishing to interfere with your rights, it is his intention that you should enjoy them to-day and in the days to come. But, as you have oppressed the people, and as many of those whom you have oppressed have appealed to the Grand Prince for justice, you cannot remain here any longer. Take, then, your wives and your children; go, and settle down in the neighbourhood of Moscow, and be thankful for the kindness shown to you by your monarch."

The citizens were mute with sorrow, but there was no time for regret. Three hundred families were turned out of their homes, and found themselves on the way to Moscow before another day had dawned; those who lingered were hurried off by Vassili's boyars. Of their worldly belongings they had no time to carry more than a few trifles with them, "but," says their annalist, "it was not their goods, but their country, that they regretted." The lower classes were now given permission to return to their homes, and a promise was made them that they should not be expatriated; but they did not trust Vassili, and large numbers of them, both husbands and wives, preferred to embrace the monastic life, and entered the neighbouring monasteries that they might be sure of dying in their native land. "Thus, was eclipsed the glory of Pskoff." Pskoff was deserted; even the strangers within her gates preferred to go to other homes rather than witness her devastation. "We remained alone," adds the annalist, "looking at the earth, which would not open; looking at the sky, which we could not reach for want of wings." The republic of Pskoff which had flourished for six centuries was no more.

It was quite sixty years after the events just related that Ivan the Terrible completed the ruin of Novgorod, which I have described elsewhere. Believing that the

citizens of Pskoff were also guilty of intriguing with the Poles, he intended that she should share the fate of Novgorod, and while the Volkhoff was still red with the blood of the Novgorodians he marched towards Pskoff. Karamsin tells us that Ivan passed the night at the convent of St. Nicholas, from which there was a view of the town, and that when, at midnight, he heard all the church bells ringing and knew that the terrified people were crowding into the churches to pray for deliverance, his heart was miraculously softened; full of sudden pity he called his generals and forbade them to use their swords against the people of Pskoff. The next day he entered the town and saw with astonishment that tables covered with food stood in front of the houses. The citizens with their families presented him with bread and salt, and addressed him humbly on bended knee. This unexpected submission pleased Ivan, and when Cornelius, the Abbot of the Pechorsky monastery, received him in the great square and conducted him to the cathedral, he was still more gratified. After the Te Deum had been sung he looked with interest at the sword of the ancient prince of Pskoff, and then asked to be conducted to the cell of the hermit Nicholas. The latter is said to have spoken his mind to the tyrant, and though historians differ as to the exact words he used, they all agree that he offered Ivan a piece of raw meat, and that Ivan refused it indignantly, saying that he was a Christian, and did not eat meat in Lent; to which Nicholas replied that he did worse, for he ate the flesh and blood of human beings, and forgot Lent and his Maker too. The threats of vengeance from heaven with which Nicholas concluded his speech had so terrifying an effect upon the tyrant that Ivan not only left the cathedral but Pskoff, too, to the great relief and joy of her people.

The cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, built in the year 1373, is a much finer and more imposing edifice than the cathedral of St. Sophia at Novgorod. It stands high on the side of a hill, planted proudly upon the ramparts, round whose base curves the river Velikaya. Ascending

the hill, we entered the old gateway of the fortress, and passed along the top of the steep rampart walls to the outer door of the cathedral; entering this door we ascended thirty-two high steps of a covered way leading to the entrance of the cathedral. We had now to go through double doors, arched and covered with massive ironwork. The interior of the building was entirely covered with fresco paintings in ponderous gilded frames; I counted six rows of full figure portraits of saints and apostles, one above the other, all framed in shining gold. The tomb of the famous prince-archbishop, Saint Vsevolod, which Ivan the Terrible had so much admired, was now disclosed to our gaze; we saw a massive silver coffin, covered with beautiful relief. Our guide told us that the heavy sword of Vsevolod is still carried round the town by the governor on all state occasions; it hung now on the wall near his tomb. We next examined the beautiful silver candelabra of elaborate workmanship, and then paid our respects to the tomb of the hermit Nicholas, beside which there hung a full-sized portrait, representing him as a half-clad crazy-looking creature. The Russians have had from the earliest times a superstitious awe for those who suffered from slight mental derangement, and it was under the guise of pretended madness that Nicholas dared on that memorable occasion to rebuke Ivan the Terrible. Returning as we had come, by the covered flight of steps, reminding us somewhat of those of the Vatican, we found ourselves once more on the ramparts. Towering high behind us was the cathedral we had just left, and in front was an old round tower of the fifteenth century, still in good repair. To our right were the steep city walls, with the winding river at their base, and to our left lay the city; a more picturesque, and at the same time a more historical spot, it would be hard to find in Russia. Those who saw Pskoff at her best compared her to the walled cities of Italy.

The government of Pskoff is full of old monasteries, and in the town itself are two interesting old palaces of the

boyars, still in good repair. As we stood upon the ramparts we could see, across the river, a monastery with a church attached to it built close to the river bank; this was the Spaso-Merojsky monastery, the little church of which we were about to visit on account of its recently restored twelfth-century frescoes. Some friends who had arranged to meet us there were rowed across the river in a little boat; we preferred to cross by the bridge in a droshky, and met them at the door of the church. Built of sandstone within the most ancient fortifications of the city, this church has walls which date from the eleventh century; but the annalists of Pskoff tell us that the present edifice and the monastery were built in the year 1156, at the command of the bishop of Novgorod. Tumuli and stone-built graves, which have been discovered in the near neighbourhood, indicate that the spot has been the dwelling-place of human beings since prehistoric times. Local archæologists believe that where the church now stands there was formerly a heathen temple. The present roof and cupola are of iron, but the original ones were of wood, the horizontal planks overlapping like a tiled roof. There are indications that the exterior was once covered with frescoes as well as the interior; in fact, we were able to distinguish the traces of one fresco on the western wall beneath the façade over the porch, and of others under the cupola. The shape of the interior is that of a cross; but the cupola does not rest upon four pillars in the centre, as is the case in all the other Pskoff churches; it is nearer to the eastern side, and one of its walls is supported by the eastern wall of the building, while the opposite side rests upon the arch of the inner wall; there is only one other church in Russia with its cupola in this position. Here there is no ikonostas—a curtain was used to separate the high altar from the body of the building. A tradition, handed down by the annalists of Pskoff, that Olga visited the spot on which this church stands, points to the fact that it was closely connected with the early history of the town. The first mention in writing of the Merojsky monastery occurs in a chronicle

of the twelfth century. In another, bearing the date 1272, there is an account of a siege of Pskoff by the Livonians, in which occurred the slaughter of several monks and two abbots. Every man was more or less of a soldier in the Middle Ages, and every monastery had its weapons for defence. The Merojsky monastery must have fallen into the hands of the enemy more than once. We are told that in 1323 the Germans took all the suburbs of Pskoff right up to its fortification walls. I have said that the church was built within the earliest fortifications, but it should be remembered that the later walls of the city did not include it and its monastery, and its position on the low bank of the river must have been anything but a safe one in war time; its treasures were all carried into the town for safety during the siege by Stephen Batori. On several occasions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries friendly troops were quartered in its cloisters and outhouses. In the year 1868 a description of the monastery and church was published by a local archæologist, but in this the frescoes are not even alluded to; covered over by thick plaster, they seem to have been unknown to this writer. It was left for another archæologist, the late M. Stroken, to make the discovery that beneath the plaster the church walls and the cupola were covered with well-preserved frescoes. In the year 1889 it was estimated, by a deputation of connoisseurs from the Academy of Painting at St. Petersburg, that it would take two years to strengthen the walls and restore the frescoes. Twenty thousand roubles were set aside by Government for the purpose,* scaffolding was put up, and the work was begun in 1890. For some unexplained reason the restoration soon came to a standstill, and remained uncompleted for several years; but in 1897 the work proceeded apace, and the restoration of the frescoes was begun under the direction of M. H. M. Saphonoff, whose successful restoration of some of the oldest frescoes in Moscow had already earned him a con-

* The reader will probably be surprised, as he reads these pages, to find how much is done by the Russian Government in such matters.

siderable reputation. Professor Pokrovsky, director of the Imperial Institution of Archæology, pronounced the frescoes of this little church to be some of the rarest specimens of the earliest Russian art. They are remarkable, not only for their style, but also for their choice of subject and the treatment of it; some, it is true, are almost obliterated, but the greater number of them have been wonderfully preserved. In one point they are unique—they represent a period in the history of painting in Russia of which no other example has come down to us.* Their restoration was sufficiently advanced in the year 1903 for the church to be once more accessible to visitors. In 1904, a few weeks before our visit, a member of the Pskoff Archæological Society, M. O. Party, had completed, after much trouble and exertion, an excellent series of photographs of the frescoes in question; these have since been published in the form of an album, so that students of fresco painting can form some idea of the originals by studying the photographs, even if they cannot get as far as Pskoff. It is not known whether the frescoes were painted by Greek, or by Russian artists, but there is no doubt about the fact that they are copies of Greek art; the faces are Greek in type, so also are the costumes. The style is purely Greek; the clothing is luxurious; the pose of the figures is fairly natural, except as regards the toes, which are pointed downward. Most of the scenes represented are biblical. The apostles and saints are, many of them, entirely without clothing, their only ornament being a halo round the head and a long beard, tapering till it reaches the feet. Among the figures that are not biblical are a king and queen in

* Writing in 1810 about the early Russian paintings, Dr. Clarke remarked: "This subject is materially connected with the history of the fine arts, for with Christianity the art of painting was introduced into Russia. Some of the ikons in the churches were brought by the first Gospel missionaries from Constantinople; their inscriptions exhibit the Greek characters of those times, and they offer most interesting examples of the art of painting many centuries before it became known to the enlightened nations of Europe"; and Coxe, writing still earlier, reminds his readers that it was the Byzantine artists who "laid the first rude foundations of that astonishing excellence which the schools of Italy afterwards attained." See also Vasari on this subject.

flowing robes; the queen is supposed to be Olga;* Pskoff claims to have been the birthplace of that famous princess, and still preserves a sleigh on which she is said to have crossed the river; Novgorod also boasts of having a sleigh which was used by her. The German word for Pskoff is *Pleskow*; hence some historians erroneously claim that Olga came from a town of that name in Bulgaria. One remarkable fresco remains distinct in my memory—three of the disciples in a boat like a cockleshell, floating upon waves indicated by lines of half circles. Another was John the Baptist baptising Christ, while a crowd pressed round him; the crowd was represented by heads rising one above the other in the form of a pyramid. A fresco, representing the Saviour, his right hand held up in the act of benediction, his left holding a book, fills the centre of the cupola; round it eight angels support a starry sky. The church is called the "Church of the Transfiguration," and one of the larger frescoes represents the transfiguration of Christ. Others are, the Sacrament of the Last Supper, and the Annunciation, in which the archangel Gabriel holds a crozier, or sceptre, in his left hand, and points with his right to the sky, while the Virgin Mary is seated on a golden footstool, her face wearing an expression of terror; the words of the angel, and Mary's reply, are written round the fresco in Slavonic characters. Another subject represented is Jacob's dream; Jacob reclines with his head resting upon a stone, while angels ascend and descend a ladder leading to the sky; one of the angels has approached Jacob and is touching him with his foot; another is Judas betraying his Master with a kiss; on his left are three Roman soldiers, and on his right three disciples; another is the miraculous draught of fishes; Christ stands on the bank and a boat containing the disciples, who have fished in vain since the dawn of day, is drawn up to the shore; Christ has just told them to cast the net again, and Peter, having recognised and obeyed his Master, is in the water drawing the net full of fish to the shore. The next fresco

* See M. Ushakoff's pamphlet, published at Pskoff in 1903.

is Christ feeding the multitude; at His feet are a number of loaves of bread, and He is handing bread to the people. Eight frescoes on one of the walls are devoted to scenes connected with the birth of Christ. Others represent scenes from the life of St. Nicholas, as recounted in the "Lives of the Saints."

Examination of the bits of plaster that have fallen from the cracks has revealed the fact that finely-chopped flax fibre must have been mixed with the lime; the plaster is much thicker than that on walls of later date. There is an old "receipt" for preparing walls for fresco painting, now in the possession of a professor of divinity at Kieff, which recommends,—"if you wish the walls to last for ever,"—that water should be continually poured on the lime during a whole summer; that the mortar should be carefully strained, and that, for the winter, the lime should be raked into a pile and covered with matting. Then the receipt goes on to say: "In order that the plaster may be durable, carefully combed flax-fibre should be cut very small and mixed with the mortar. The preparation of the walls to receive the paint should take a year and six weeks." The frescoes I have been describing were painted on walls thus prepared; it is clear that they must have been executed on dry plaster. Whether paintings on dry plaster can rightly be designated as "frescoes" I leave it to others to decide. The artists of Pskoff had made so great a name for themselves in the sixteenth century that, after the destruction by fire of the ikons in the Royal Chapel in the palace at Moscow, in 1547, they were summoned to Moscow to repair the loss.

We had heard while at Novgorod of M. Plushkin's wonderful collection of curios and antiquities at Pskoff, but we did not know until we drove to his house, that M. Plushkin was the owner of the principal draper's shop in the town; beside the shop was a modest entrance to M. Plushkin's private dwelling, with his name upon a small brass plate. The door having been opened to us by a maid, we mounted a flight of stairs which led immediately

from the street-door to the first floor. At the top of the stairs M. Plushkin himself met us, and enquired, with a somewhat puzzled expression, what there was that he could do for us. We told him we had come to see M. Plushkin's museum.

"I am Plushkin," replied the little man, drawing himself up. "I have no museum—only the things I have collected in this house. You shall see them if you like. Will you come this way?" and he led us as he spoke into the nearest room. We looked around us; it was like an antiquarian's shop. Pulling out a small drawer from a cabinet about four feet high, M. Plushkin began to show us his wonderful collection of coins, which is considered by numismatologists to be one of the finest in Europe, and better than that of the Hermitage. We first looked at the Russian coins, of which he had a great many, and among them some of the earliest. The oldest coins of Russia do not date back further than the year 980.* There were *grivnas* like those we had seen at Novgorod; bars of silver valuing two roubles, and others cut in half to make two separate roubles.† Those of Pskoff, Novgorod, Tver, Kieff, Kazan,—each had a different stamp, until the sixteenth century. The smallest Russian coin in those days was very thin, and about one-third of the size of the English farthing; the largest was a rouble, eight inches square. We saw here also some very large square Swedish coins of brass, and a twenty-five rouble piece in gold, given to M. Plushkin by a member of the Imperial family who had come to see his collection; another rouble in bronze weighed seven pounds; it was an inch thick and three inches across; there was one bearing the head of the false Dmitri. There were also interesting Byzantine coins, most of them concave, and a number of Papal, Mohammedan, and Jewish coins, the latter with a representation of Solomon's temple. The next cabinet contained eighty-four boxes of foreign coins found

* The first mention made of roubles is in 1321. See Karamsin.

† The word "rouble" is derived from the past participle of the verb *rubĭt*—to cut or chop up.

mostly in Pskoff. Some of the foreign coins had been coined in the year 2300 B.C.; some were Chinese coins of the year 2000 B.C. We found a drawer of coins from every nation in Europe, including Poland, and in that devoted to English coins were some rare specimens that are hardly to be obtained even in our own country. M. Plushkin's was the first private collection of coins in Russia; he began it more than thirty years ago; his name appears in almost every volume on the subject. In the same room he showed us several book-shelves filled with numismatologic literature, as well as piles of books on the same subject, which were too large to stand on the shelves; we turned over the pages of one which contained a flattering dedication to M. Plushkin; several royal personages have at various times honoured this collection of coins by a special visit. Before going on to describe his other treasures, I must say that the coins are the only section of his museum which M. Plushkin has attempted to classify, or even to arrange; everything has been bought as chance offered, and placed in whatever spot appeared the most handy. I should mention that we also saw a fine collection of Russian paper money; there was a paper note valuing twenty-five roubles, so large that it resembled rather an important legal document than a piece of paper money. The parchment in each case bore the signature of the reigning sovereign; we found the signatures of all the emperors and empresses who have reigned in Russia.

"Here," said M. Plushkin, turning to his other treasures, "are some letters written by Field-Marshal Suvaroff. They want me to sell them for the Suvaroff museum, but I won't part with them. The Suvaroff collectors say: 'We have none of Suvaroff's letters—but Plushkin has them!'"

Among the old ikons with which the walls were covered was one representing devils carrying off a warrior saint in armour. Many of the ikons were of Byzantine origin; as well as heads there were interesting pictures; one represented the scenes of the Last Judgment, and a very rare ikon, painted on wood, represented St. Christopher with the head of some

animal in place of his own. There were also ikons painted on stone, on ivory, and on pebbles. We next looked through a pile of two thousand engravings, one of which represented Peter III. getting out of a coffin, and Paul I. taking him by the hand, while an angel was flying down to them from the sky. The curios were in the apartments inhabited by the family, a suite of some five or six rooms opening into one another, one of them being a spare bedroom. M. Plushkin seemed to have begun by placing each curio as he obtained it in his library, drawing-room, or sitting-room, just as a lady might place a new curio in her boudoir; but let the reader picture to himself a suite of rooms, in which this kind of thing has been going on steadily for thirty years! —The what-nots had become literally packed with painted china, ornaments, vases, clocks and mosaics. The smaller drawers were stuffed with quaint old seals, studs, ponderous watches, massive rings, pocket idols, old playing-cards, medals and jewellery. The larger drawers contained garments, or fragments of garments, costly stuffs, silks and brocades, many of them richly embroidered with pearls or gold thread; these enabled us to picture the sumptuous style of dress indulged in by the great Boyars of Pskoff and their ladies, at a time when Moscow was little more than a village. Among them we found a fingerless glove embroidered with gold and pearls; this curious article of dress was used by the secluded ladies of the nobility to hide their faces, like the fan of a Spanish lady, at the approach of strangers of the opposite sex. There were also costumes and head-dresses,—literally coated with pearls. The pearl was evidently considered an indispensable ornament, not only for the ladies' head-dresses, but also for the Boyars' caps, and the chasubles of the priests. Every family of distinction seems to have presented a velvet chasuble covered with pearls to the lavra at Kieff, if not to those of Sergieff and St. Petersburg as well; as all travellers who have visited the lavras can testify. Another peculiarity of the old costumes was that the pockets hung outside, instead of inside the dress as they do with us.

Amongst the curios on one of the whatnots were,—a masonic key; a masonic ring with a representation of a human eye, said to have been worn by Paul I.; and a masonic seal. There was also a drawer filled with masonic badges and ornaments. Freemasonry was introduced into Russia at a comparatively early stage of her civilisation and spread rapidly and successfully throughout the country. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries its ranks were swelled by hundreds of patriotic men, noble-minded ones, who wished to benefit the people and devote their lives to their country's good, and who rejoiced in a culture and learning far superior to that which distinguished the heads of the Orthodox church. By becoming Freemasons these men found themselves in touch with the brotherhood in all parts of Europe; and it was thus that they eventually came in contact with the teachings of the great mystics, such as Arndt, Fénélon, and Madame Guyon. The writings of the mystics became by this means more popular in Russia than they were in their own countries; but the Freemasons of Russia did not confine themselves to theories and contemplations, they set to work to make themselves of practical use; the principal object towards which they turned their energies was the improvement of public education. Moscow became the centre of their activities.* They founded a society for the encouragement of literature; and, in order to help penniless and timid authors, they bought all the work that was brought to them, good, bad, or indifferent—original compositions, prose, verses, or translations. In fact, they earned the reputation of purchasing literary productions by weight. So careful were they of the authors' feelings that they paid for all work by the sheet. Much of the literary work being worthless, a great deal was thrown on the fire as soon as paid for; but the aim of the society was secured. Literature was encouraged. Karamsin, the historian, and the greatest Russian writer of his day, was one of the talented authors thus discovered and encouraged. But alas for the

* See Turguenieff's account of them.

Freemasons of Russia! There were breakers ahead, as all my readers who have studied the history of the country during the reign of Catherine II. will have read for themselves. Such relics as those in M. Plushkin's museum are all that is left of them.

The walls of every room of this remarkable museum were thickly hung with ikons, paintings, engravings, miniatures, weapons, medals, and tapestry. Among the paintings we noticed a portrait of Alexander I. as a little boy; a portrait of a daughter of Menshikoff, the favourite of Peter the Great, who was banished to Siberia; the portrait of Marfa Boretsky,* already alluded to; a portrait of Peter the Great; a portrait of Paul I.; and a portrait of Herzen, the famous editor of the "Kolokol"; a Salvator Rosa; and a Greuze. There was a picture of Catherine II. reviewing her cavalry regiment of Amazons; Catherine was seated in a golden carriage, which reminded us of "Lord Mayor's Day," and in front of the regiment rode a lady dressed as its colonel. The ladies who composed this regiment were clad in long blue riding skirts, with tightly-fitting red jackets, golden helmets, and spears in their hands. One of the grand dukes, a brother of the present Emperor, who spent an entire day in the museum, was much interested in this picture, and told M. Plushkin that he had never before heard of Catherine's having had a regiment of Amazons. All the small spaces on the walls were crowded with miniatures on ivory and on metal. There was a curious miniature of Ivan III., and one of Vassili. Here, too, was a miniature of the mother of Poushkin the poet, when a girl. The Poushkin family had an estate in the government of Pskoff; thus M. Plushkin had been able to obtain many trophies, such as the poet's seal and his drinking-glass. There were medals struck in the reign of Napoleon I., and bearing his portrait. There was a tapestry picture of the Empress Josephine, and a handsome French mirror bearing the date 1814. Among the engravings there were a number

* See chapter on Staria Russa.

of coloured ones worthy of notice. There were also many old paintings on wood.

"I will now show you something that I prize very highly," said M. Plushkin, and opening a small cabinet drawer he took out an old parchment; it was a hand-written indulgence issued by Pope Clement XII. He then showed us a letter written by Gogol; a real Russian knout, consisting of three stout whips made into one; a collection of manuscript books on parchment, and a drawerful of beautiful ladies' fans of every make and description. In the centre of the last room of the suite we found a small aquarium filled with various kinds of fish, above which hung several cages full of birds. As for the painted china, I cannot attempt to do it justice, and must content myself with the remark that I never saw so choice a collection in so small a space before. The watches were also worth far more attention than we were able to bestow; among them was, perhaps, the thinnest watch that has ever been made; it was about as large as a five-franc piece, and scarcely thicker. Another thing that attracted our attention was a collection of old Russian jewellery, worn by ladies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The earrings, the massive breastplates, the heavy chains, bore a remarkable resemblance to those now worn by the Turkoman women of Transcaspia; their weight must have been enormous.

As we were leaving, M. Plushkin shook hands with us and said, "I never stir from this spot in search of objects for my collection; people know I pay a fair price and bring the things of their own accord. You are the first English-speaking people who have entered my house; your interest in my collection has given me much pleasure, and if any of your friends come to Pskoff I shall be pleased to show them my things. I am getting old, and though I would never part with any object singly, I should like to find a purchaser for the collection in its entirety. If you have any friends in England or America who might like to make me an offer, I should be pleased to come to terms." He then told us the sum at which he himself

valued the collection, but as I omitted to enter it in my notebook it has escaped my memory. Quite apart from his museum M. Plushkin had shown us a set of presentation plate, which had been presented to him some few years since by the townspeople on the occasion of his silver wedding. It was clear that he had earned the respect and affection of his fellow-citizens.

We had passed four hours in inspecting M. Plushkin's treasures, and yet we hardly seemed to have been there half an hour, so quickly did the time fly. Now, however, we began to feel both tired and hungry as we drove to our hotel in search of rest and refreshment. Alas! the "London Hotel" at Pskoff was one to which I would not recommend my bitterest enemy; but I will spare the reader a detailed account of its horrors, of which one of the minor ones was a Russian orchestra—a musical box of enormous dimensions, such as that from which Tchaikofsky is said to have derived his first ideas of melody. It had a great glass front, inside which was stationed a dummy conductor in evening dress, who kept time with his *bâton* to the execrable pieces which rolled forth in merciless succession as we partook of our much-needed repast. As the evening wore on we strove to read a little by the light of a wretched candle. There is no electric light in Pskoff as yet; an energetic sausage-maker, of German extraction, who successfully introduced a water supply, has long been asking for permission to introduce electric light, but the Russian authorities say they will do it themselves. The first newspaper in Pskoff was only started four years ago; it did not begin to pay its own expenses till the third year of its existence; the editor is a German doctor, who is engaged all day with his medical duties; his daughter acts as sub-editor; Dr. Rauch has been in practice at Pskoff for the last forty years. It is also owing to the efforts of the Germans that a little steamer now plies during the summer months between Pskoff and a cool spot on the river-side, where there has sprung up a cluster of summer villas and a restaurant.

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View of the Cathedral and fortress, Pskoff.

Interior of the Pogankini Palace, Pskoff.

[*To face page* 165.

"There is no demand for a good hotel," remarked Miss Rauch, when I related some of our experiences at the "London." "Russians do not come to Pskoff unless they have friends or relations with whom they can stay, and foreigners know too little of Russia as a whole to think of coming here; you will not find many who have even heard the name of Pskoff."

Yet the next day, when we called on Colonel Ushakoff, honorary secretary and member of the Pskoff Archæological Society, he told us that he had just completed and sent to Washington an article on the history and present state of the town, which he had undertaken at the request of the compilers of the new American Encyclopædia. This may result in fresh victims for the "London Hotel."

The following day we set out in the company of Colonel Ushakoff for the archæological museum, opened three years ago. The building containing it, the Pogankini Palace, is in itself worth a visit; it is one of the few patrician houses of the seventeenth century still in existence; it did not see Pskoff in her pride and splendour, but it saw her decline and fall; its owner was a wealthy merchant belonging to a company of merchants, which took the place of the Hanseatic League, and had business connection with all parts of Europe; he was not a member of the Orthodox church; a book of his which has been found proves this. The parquet floors of pine-wood are still in good repair. The tiles of the old porcelain stove have been carefully collected, and now cover a new one; on each tile there is a green bird, with a human head and a golden crown, supposed to represent either a syren or a bird-of-paradise, I could not make out which. The walls of the room are remarkably strong; the lower are seven feet thick, the upper five feet; the windows are small. In the first room we found a picture recently brought from one of the neighbouring convents; it was painted in the seventeenth century, and represents Christ steering the vessel of Truth. The good people are in the vessel, the bad are on the shore, begging to be allowed to embark; Origen, the bad bishop,

stands on the bank, and round him are grouped Poles, Jews, Arians, and various other heretics, including many Roman Emperors; in the city of Babylon, which the vessel of Truth is leaving, the scarlet woman is discernible, and a seven-headed monster has its many tongues of fire stretched out after the vessel; one of the good people in the ship is a king with a harp in his hand and a crown on his head; in one corner of the picture is a tub for the baptism of repentant sinners, with devils flying round it in the guise of birds. The walls between the rooms are six feet thick, and cupboards of a commodious size are built into the walls. The book I have mentioned above as belonging to the original owner of this house was here shown to us; it bears the date 1645, and was quite recently found for sale in the bazaar. The Emperor Nicholas II. made a present of this old palace to the town, and when he visited Pskoff to review the troops, in 1903, he headed the opening page of the newly-instituted visitors' book with his Imperial signature; the pen used by him on that memorable occasion still lies by the book under a glass case, to be gazed at with awe and affection by the simple townspeople who flock to the museum on Sundays and holidays, when it is open to the public without charge for admission. Amongst the objects of interest we found an engraved portrait of Stephen Batori, who so gallantly but vainly besieged Pskoff in 1581. There were also several of the so-called *Babas*—figures of old women carved in stone, larger than life—of which there is such a fine collection in the historical museum at Moscow;* these particular ones were found within three miles of Pskoff on ancient tombs; those at Moscow, forty-three in

* See notes to Chapter IX. on this subject. Sir Charles Gascoigne found several of these stone women on the steppe near his iron foundry on the Donetz, and had careful drawings made of them, about the year 1800. "They have stood, for certain, for 1300 years," he wrote, "and God knows how much longer." Every traveller has agreed, from Pallas onwards, that the faces are of the Mongol type. They have been found from the Dnieper right away to the Yenisei in Central Siberia. Haxthausen considered them the most interesting monuments of the past in Russia.

number, were brought from the south of Russia, mostly from the steppe country round Ekaterinoslav; one of the latter measures seven feet in height if measured from the top of the pointed head-dress; her skirt, reaching to just below her knees, is gathered in at the waist, and has two tucks round the bottom. In every case the *baba* has her hands crossed, or laid upon her breast; one, whose hands are clasped, holds a small pot between them; the Pskoff *babas* are simply dressed, but some of those at Moscow have quite elaborate skirts and even necklaces round their necks. Further on there were several skulls, a number of palæolithic implements, and some mammoth bones like those in M. Peredolsky's collection at Novgorod. Professor Weinberg has promised to make a careful examination of the skulls, and I hope he will do so. There is a considerable amount of bronze jewellery that has been found upon the bodies excavated from the tumuli in the vicinity of Pskoff—necklaces, rings and waistbands. The hair of the women was often done up in as many as seven plaits; each plait was drawn through a spiral bronze ring, which, large at first, decreased in size with the plait, the last coil having about the circumference of a pea; each plait ended with a bronze ornament. The bronze waistbands, or girdles, were of very fine workmanship, like metal cords. There were many long bronze neck-chains; these were found upon male as well as upon female bodies. It is extraordinary how much of this jewellery was buried with a single individual. M. Ushakoff assured us that puds of it* were found in every grave.

We now inspected a number of coins that had been turned up with the plough, either within the area of the town itself or in the neighbouring fields. Before banks and the custom of banking were known in Russia everybody had to bury his money in order that it might not be stolen. The Pskoff traders had their own primitive banks underground, where they kept not only Russian money, but foreign coin as well; we saw some with *Worms*, others with *Meintz*, stamped on them, and a number of Asiatic coins.

* A pud is forty pounds.

The treasure was buried in earthenware or clay vessels, the size varying according to the amount; many of them when opened were found to be packed full of coin. It is thought that the owners must in many cases have forgotten in which spot they had buried their treasure, and thus been unable to recover it, or they might have died without telling their heirs were to dig. On hearing this I was reminded of Tennyson's old gardener at Freshwater, who sadly pointed out to me the spot where his master had himself buried a dozen pipes for the sake of purifying them. "He always said it was just there," explained the old man, pointing to a particular flower-bed; "but we dug, and dug, and dug, without finding them, and so they must be there still." Monomachus, in the instructions he left to his children, said: "Do not bury your riches in the bosom of the earth, for that is contrary to the precepts of Christianity." The Emperor Maurice reproached the Slavs of his day for their habit of burying their wealth, but the peasants of Russia do it still.* Pepys says in his "Diary" that he buried his money when the Dutch sailed up the Thames, and many an Englishman has done the like, but with us it has never been a distinct propensity.

In the old days the nobles were paid for their military services by grants of land, and we now looked at a collection of parchment documents by which the czars and princes made over the territory to its new owners. Each piece of parchment had the seal of the reigning sovereign attached to it by a silken cord. One of these bore the name of an ancestor of the poet Poushkin, to whom a grant of land had been made; close to it were several of the poet's private belongings, amongst which we noticed his billiard cue.

M. Ushakoff next unfolded for our benefit an old plan of Pskoff as a thrice-walled city; the outer wall shown was eight miles in circumference. Thanks to that gentleman's kindness we were able to bring away with us a copy of this interesting trophy. The plan has also been printed upon picture postcards.

* See Rambaud's "Histoire de la Russie."

One room is set apart for church ikons; many in this collection are very rare and valuable, being much earlier work than those in the Moscow museum. The reader must remember that Pskoff itself dates from the eighth century, whilst everything of greater antiquity than the fourteenth century that is to be found in the museum at Moscow has been carried there since the decay of the older towns. There were some ikons here that had once been the property of the Strogonoffs, one of the wealthiest families of merchant princes that Russia has ever had.* Besides the ikons we found a number of carved wooden crosses taken from the churches of the seventeenth century, with layers of ornamental metal-work over the wood; these crosses were all of the Byzantine form—the so-called *seven-end* crosses. We also noted a fine old church pillar of carved and gilded wood, and numbers of other trophies from the seventeenth century churches of Pskoff, which had been burned down or otherwise destroyed.

In a glass case in the last room we found six letters that Catherine II. had written to an engineer residing at Pskoff, about the construction of a canal between Moscow and St. Petersburg, which Peter the Great had planned just before his death, and which Catherine was anxious to see carried out. The engineer in question was Hannibal, the grandfather of Poushkin. The poet's mother was a beautiful woman; born and brought up at Pskoff, it was there that she became engaged to the poet's father. I saw a china plate in memory of her, not unlike a piece of Wedgwood, with the figures of a pretty girl and a young man in white upon blue; the girl is represented as hurrying along and looking back shyly over her shoulder at the youth, who is earnestly entreating her not to leave him. Round the rim is written in Russian: "There's no need to hurry away so fast!" These young people were Pouslıkin's parents. The Pskoff people believe that the poet was himself born at Pskoff, and it is clear from the unmistakable trophies that his family must have been connected with that government

* See Chapter XVIII. for an account of their origin.

for several generations at least. Yet the only biographies of Poushkin that I have met with give Moscow as the place of his birth. His father certainly resided at Moscow, was a good French scholar, and had many friends among the French *émigrés*. The boy grew up with a passion for Voltaire and Molière; later on he was greatly influenced by the works of Byron, Scott, and Shakespeare. Some foreign biographers think that the Russians praise Poushkin too highly, and that he was never anything more than a provincial poet; but the Russians in their turn retort that it would be impossible for a foreigner to appreciate his greatest beauties.

Among the interesting people with whom we had the good fortune to meet at Pskoff was a German lady, who has for eighteen years been engaged in teaching in a school for Russian peasants, which was started and carried on at the expense of a patriotic Russian lady whose estate is far out in the country, in a part where there are many peasant children; and, until she set to work, no schools for them to attend. When we expressed our surprise that a German of the Lutheran faith should have been chosen as teacher in a school for Orthodox Russians, Miss Julia Stein explained to us that it had come about by mere accident; she had happened to be the only suitable person at hand and had therefore offered to open the school. Twenty of her earliest pupils are now teachers in peasant schools themselves. The boys, of whose secular education she has the entire control with the aid of six assistant teachers, are of various ages, ranging from seven to twenty years of age. Miss Stein also superintends a boarding-house for those who live at a distance too great for walking. A priest visits the school on certain days of the week for the purpose of instructing the pupils in the religion of the Orthodox church. So pleased has the Holy Synod been with Miss Stein's management of the school, and with the class of pupils she has turned out, that they have presented her quite recently with a handsome Bible as a token of their gratitude and respect. "I get very much attached to my boys," said Miss

Stein, when we asked her about them; "and it makes me very sad to think of the dreadful war that has taken so many of them to Manchuria."

Our last hours of daylight in Pskoff were passed most agreeably in the company of the mayor of that town, to whose house we had bent our steps on account of the fame of what we may appropriately call the "Wallace Collection" of Pskoff. A spacious hall, a staircase, and a suite of rooms, furnished entirely with works of art, were thrown open to our view. Here we admired no less than forty eighteenth-century clocks of French and English workmanship; amongst them was a grandfather's clock, which, having been wound up in our honour, played a good old English tune after striking the hour. There were watches innumerable, of every size and description; and brasses; and china from Sèvres, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna, and England, Wedgwood and Worcester being well represented. There was also some exquisite China manufactured in St. Petersburg, by a firm of the name of Gardener and Popoff. Gardener was an Englishman, and Popoff hailed from Moscow; between them these two produced a kind of imitation Vienna china; but the firm is no longer in existence; probably their china was too costly to find a sufficient number of purchasers in Russia.

There were some fine pieces of French furniture—Louis XVI. cabinets and tables; also, what had more interest for us, some extremely handsome upholstered Russian chairs in good condition, which had belonged to a boudoir of Catherine II. I could not have believed that the Russians of that time were capable of turning out such splendid work had not M. Sudhoff assured me that they really were made in Russia, by Russian workmen, especially for Catherine's use. We also noticed some exquisitely inlaid Italian furniture, and a number of valuable oil-paintings by the old masters. I regret that the names of the painters have escaped my memory.

M. Sudhoff and M. Plushkin have both been accumulating the treasures of their respective museums in the

same town for the same length of time, that is, for more than thirty years; yet neither has ever dreamed of visiting the museum of the other since the days when they first began to collect. I doubt if there is another town in Europe with two such private collections. M. Sudhoff remarked, just as M. Plushkin had done, that he had never shown his collection to English-speaking people before. M. Sudhoff had been in England and spoke our language perfectly; he is a German, and a member of the Lutheran church, which has two places of worship in Pskoff,—one for Letts and one for Russian Germans. The present German pastor has ministered to his flock for the last twenty-nine years, and has lived in one and the same house since the day of his arrival there as a young man fresh from the University of Dorpat. The handsome birch trees that now tower above the parsonage were planted in the year of their arrival by the young wife who accompanied him to his new sphere. A large family of children have grown up and married, whilst the elderly couple still continue in the old home.

"I have always intended to visit M. Sudhoff's collection," said the now white-haired pastor's wife, when she heard we had been there; "but somehow I never seem to get the time; and there is M. Plushkin's, too, I really must try to see that some day."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PECHORSKY MONASTERY.

Discovery of the catacombs—The monastic dell—Mushrooms—Flax—Isborsk—Drive from Pechora to the monastery—Our *izvoschik*—The monastic inn—A woman in a monastery—The archimandrite—The cathedral—In the catacombs—Treasures—Ivan the Terrible's purse—An ancient bell—The Empress Anne's carriage—Subduing the flesh—The drawbridge—Monastic fare—The village schoolmaster.

IT was as far back as the year 1470 that some huntsmen in the sandy fir-covered hills about fifteen miles to the east of Pskoff halted in surprise at the sound of singing, which seemed to rise from the ground on which they stood. Not a human habitation was in sight, nor was there any trace in the sand around them of human footsteps. They put their ears to the ground. Yes, there was the singing again, quite clear now; they could distinguish a familiar church anthem sung by the voices of monks. Determined to find an entrance to the subterranean church above which they seemed to be standing the huntsmen began a careful search, which was soon rewarded by the discovery of an entrance in the hillside to a series of catacombs hewn out of the sandstone rock of which the hill was formed. The singing which had attracted the attention of the huntsmen proved to be that of holy hermits who had elected to end their days in this cave dwelling. The news of the discovery soon spread over the country, and the hill of the catacombs received the name of the "Sacred Hill." Later on a monastery was built upon its crest. This is all that is known of the early history of these cata-

combs. The first church in the monastery was built by a monk called John, who was persecuted by the Germans of Dorpat in 1473. Peter the Great surrounded the monastery with a rampart, bastions, and a moat; he made a regular fortress of it, and to-day it might almost be mistaken at a little distance for one of the picturesque old German castles of the Middle Ages.* The Swedes besieged it in 1703. There are now six churches within its walls, and in one of these there is an ikon which is said to have saved the monastery from Napoleon's devastating army. One of the churches is a cathedral. The Russian word for a catacomb is *pechera*, hence the derivation of the name given to the monastery, and that given to the nearest town —Pechora, for which destination a train starts every day from Pskoff at the early hour of seven, for the convenience of the inhabitants of Pskoff, who constantly make pilgrimages to the Pechorsky monastery, and like, when they do so, to make a day of it. They reach the monastery in time for the ten o'clock service in the cathedral, and return to Pskoff by a train leaving Pechora at eight in the evening. So slowly does this pilgrim train move that we took exactly one hour to cover the fifteen miles which separate Pskoff from Pechora.

We left the "London Hotel" at six in the morning in order to catch the pilgrim train at seven; half-way between Pskoff and its station we passed some enormous barracks, with a church and officers' quarters attached—a military town, all in neat red brick. From the inscription on the high wall of the barracks we learned that they were those of several Siberian regiments, one of which was the Tomsk regiment. An elderly lady in her own trap passed our slow-going droshky like the wind. We met her in the monastery later in the day, her hands full of little loaves she was holding for the priest to bless on behalf of her relations at home. We met her also in the monastery gardens afterwards, and it was there that I remarked upon the fleetness of her horse as compared to our own.

* Batori tried in vain to take it in 1581.

"Ah!" she replied. "That was my own horse, and being well-fed, he could of course go faster than a hired one."

As our train crawled along boys and girls with baskets of freshly-gathered mushrooms could be seen awaiting our arrival at the little wayside station. Some of the children had a pair of live ducks in one hand and a basket of mushrooms in the other. We were the only people in the train who did not buy; even the conductor found the mushrooms irresistible; after much bargaining he took a basket. As the train moved on again a lengthy dispute between a third-class passenger and a boy with a couple of live ducks was still in full swing. Watching them with my head out of the window I saw their figures beginning to disappear in the distance, when the passenger ended the dispute by seizing the ducks from the boy's hands and running after the train with the long-suffering birds tucked under his arm; he caught us up without much trouble; such an incident could hardly occur in any country but Russia.

The scenery on both sides was growing steadily prettier. Soft undulations, for which we had sighed in vain in the flat steppe between Novgorod and St. Petersburg, now lent a charm to the sandy ground, which soon became covered here and there with patches of purple heather and clumps of needle pine. The first four miles of country round Pskoff are devoted to the growth of flax; it had been flax, flax, flax, as far as the eye could see. As I have remarked elsewhere, flax grows well in low-lying marshy ground, and thrives all the better for plenty of rain, of which there was an abundant supply in the summer of 1904. We had planned to visit a village of some size not far from Pskoff, but changed our minds on discovering that its name was the Russian equivalent for *Stick-in-the-Mud*, derived from the verb which best describes its situation. For a similar reason we refrained from visiting the historical spot on which now stands the village of Isborsk, which is all that remains of the town founded by Truvor, the brother of Rurik, in the year 862; a bit of the old wall is still to

be seen and part of the moat that surrounded it; a stone slab is also shown there as that of Truvor's grave.

It was after we had passed Isborsk that the scenery began to improve; the sand of the undulating hills was in strata of various colours. The lower strata were of red sand, those above were of a greenish hue, and the uppermost layer was of silver sand, as clean and pure as that of the seashore; where it was covered with heather, it might have been a bit of Scotland.

Arrived at Pechora, we selected one of the queer little droshkies in waiting, and drove up to the monastery through prettier country than anything we had met with in north Russia before. On both sides of our steep and winding road there were thick clumps of pine and other trees, and looking down into the surrounding valleys the eye could command an extensive and pleasing view of flax and corn fields, which expanded more widely the higher our droshky climbed. Before reaching the monastery we had to pass through an apparently prosperous village; it had the appearance of a rural town, with its respectable market-place ornamented by a wooden pump in its centre, and a long wooden colonnade,—quite Italian—which, built in front of the shops that lined one side of the village street, supported the extended roofs of the houses. Our driver, who was an Esthonian and knew no German, told us in Russian that the boundary which marks the beginning of the government of Riga was only three versts from this village. He also pointed out, through the trees, the green roofs of the snug little group of buildings which compose the cottage hospital, and promised to take us past it on our homeward drive in the evening. Another spot of interest was the wall-enclosed cemetery, filled with handsome tombs and crosses, intermingling with dark fir trees. Here the monks of the Pechorsky monastery have for centuries found their last earthly resting-place. "*I* shall not be buried there," said our driver, "because I am a Lutheran." He was one of the Esthonian colonists, and had a shrewder face than we had ever met with among Russian *isvoschiks*;

in fact, we had hesitated at first to engage him for such a lonely drive on that account. Ladies travelling alone are naturally inclined to be conservative, and prefer to trust those they have already proved; but we were glad in the long run that we had engaged this Esthonian, for his conversation was both instructive and entertaining, and the hard expression of his face softened as he talked.

We drove past the low archway which formed the chief entrance to the monastery fortress into the courtyard, and drew up before the door of the monastery inn. Our driver, having promised to fetch us in time for the evening train, returned to the station, while we made our way into the unattractive inn, and mounted the stairs in search of refreshment. A monk in a grey robe met us at the top of the flight and conducted us into a room with whitewashed walls, a small iron bedstead, a table with a white cloth, and a few chairs. We sat down by the table and asked for a samovar to make some tea which we had brought with us. The monk gave a nod and disappeared. A minute later, thinking we should like some eggs, I set out in search of the kitchen. The first door I opened was that of a room furnished like the one we were now occupying; in it a party of pilgrims, who had travelled with us from Pskoff, were seated round a samovar drinking tea. The party consisted of father, mother, and two little girls, neatly dressed in pink dresses and straw hats. The kitchen, I found, was opposite, for the monk now came out and asked for whom I was looking. Just inside the kitchen door I could see an elderly woman, apparently on her knees, and stooping low before a charcoal fire to blow it up. I had not expected to find a woman employed in a monastic inn, and looked at her with interest as I asked for the eggs. Soon after I had returned to our room, the door opened and in came the woman, with a plate of boiled eggs. I now discovered for the first time that the poor creature was maimed; she had no legs. Before we had recovered from our surprise she had made her way quickly to the table, by drawing herself along with the aid

of her free arm, and placed the eggs upon it. The monk now followed with the steaming samovar. He told us we must not be long over our tea, or we should be late for the ten o'clock service in the cathedral. Having completed our light repast we hastened down the stairs and across the courtyard to the monastery gateway. When we had passed within the fortification walls we found that the six churches were built in a basin-like dell, and that there were two ways of reaching them, the one a low vaulted passage, the other a long flight of stone steps, with overhanging trees on either side of them. As the sun was getting hot we chose to descend by the shaded steps. About half-way down there was a sort of bridge platform, in front of a pretty villa built upon the sloping ground; it had a garden round it full of flowers, and creepers on its walls. This, we were told, was the house in which dwelt the archimandrite, to whom we must apply for permission to enter the catacombs. Before we had rung the bell we saw the venerable head of the monastery coming up the steps towards his house in the company of a couple of priests. We presented him with our letter of introduction, and he at once sent one of the monks in search of the village schoolmaster, who was to act as our guide. The archimandrite was an old man, eighty-four years of age; he had held that position for over twenty-five years. Some of our Pskoff friends had been present at the service held in the cathedral a few weeks earlier in honour of his jubilee.

The dell in which the churches were built was such a deep one that only their cupolas and the tops of the trees planted on its sloping sides could be seen above the fortress walls. The cathedral had a magnificent flight of low steps leading to its doors, and its back walls appeared to be built into the hillside. We attended the service in a heated atmosphere impregnated with incense; the interior was crowded with pilgrims. A priest repeated for half an hour, apparently without taking breath, the words "*Gospodi Pomiloi, Gospodi Pomiloi, Gospodi Pomiloi,*"* as

* God have mercy upon us.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Sandell film.]

The Pechorsky Monastery.

Sandell film.]

Pilgrims at the Pechorsky Monastery.

[*To face page* 178.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

fast as he could get them out. The two little girls in pink were kneeling among the rest, each with a doll clasped to her breast, and her head reverently bent. Outside on the steps stood a crowd of ragged beggars, all maimed, or halt, or blind, or pretending to be so, and entreating every pilgrim who passed to give them alms. After we had come out of the cathedral the schoolmaster unlocked a door in a line with the principal door of that edifice, and we entered the catacombs, each carrying a lighted taper. They were larger and more airy than the Kieff catacombs and had been well built up with bricks, so that it was only in places that we could examine their natural walls of hard rocky sandstone. A few years ago there were signs of their beginning to fall in, and it was necessary to strengthen them with a brick lining. There were several tombs of former archimandrites to be looked at in the niches, and some old figures cut into the sandstone; then we emerged once more into the light of day.

The treasures of the sacristy had now to be seen, and the schoolmaster unlocked its double doors with enormous iron keys, such as are only to be seen in buildings of the Middle Ages, and we proceeded to explore the treasures, always accompanied by a monk as well as the schoolmaster, as a precaution against theft. The chief peculiarity that distinguished the treasures now displayed to us from those of the other rich monasteries we visited, was that everything above a certain value had its price attached to it, just as if it were for sale. One velvet chasuble, covered with gold, pearls, and precious stones, was marked at nineteen thousand roubles. A New Testament bound in gold was marked at three thousand roubles, and bore the date 1670. A sash, such as the priests wear on state occasions, was worth fifteen thousand roubles. Another chasuble, presented by some royal personage in 1818, bore the price of ten thousand roubles. We saw a fine chasuble that had been presented to the monastery by Nicholas II. on the occasion of his visit in 1903, but there was no price upon that one; it, also, was of velvet, em-

broidered with pearls. There were some old church vessels of wood, bearing the date 1470, and a bit of old tapestry from the year 1552; it had been worked by the hand of Anastasia, the first wife of Ivan the Terrible. We were shown the travelling spoon and fork, and the purse, used by Ivan the Terrible; the purse was of yellow velvet embroidered with silver. There were also a number of manuscript books in massive covers of gilded silver. It was in the reign of Ivan III. that printed books were introduced into Russia, but the earliest printing of the Scriptures was not till the year 1564, when the first public press was established in Moscow, and the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles were published. Copies of these are preserved in the Imperial library; they are remarkable for the beauty of their type and the good quality of their paper. The last objects that caught our attention were velvet mitres covered with pearls and precious stones. As we passed out of the two great iron-bound doors, we paused in the iron-grated porch to measure the key as it was taken out of the huge lock; it was half a foot long. In the enclosed grass-plot outside the sacristy stood a tall post on which was suspended a massive band of iron curved to form a half circle five feet in diameter; it was the ancient gong, used for the cathedral before the introduction of bells. I have seen similar ones in several of the provincial museums, but this was the only one I ever saw literally at its post.

We were now taken to see the carriage in which the Empress Anne had travelled to the monastery all the way from St. Petersburg in the seventeeth century; its great wheels were five feet in diameter, and must have been convenient for getting through the mud. The monk then showed us an iron cross which one of the former archi-mandrites had worn upon his back to subdue the flesh; the iron shoulder-straps used for fastening it to his shoulders were an inch wide; the weight of the whole was twenty-seven pounds.

When the news of the conclusion of the christening of

the Czarévitch was telegraphed to the archimandrite, a few weeks before our visit, a peal of all the Pechorsky bells announced the happy event to the country round. This we heard from the schoolmaster, who now took us through the monastic kitchens to a flight of innumerable wooden steps leading up to the brim of the hollow, on the opposite side to that on which we had descended by the stone steps. The wooden steps took us up the side of a green bank planted with apple trees; this was part of the monastic orchard which continued to the top of the dell and spread half-way round it. Following a narrow path which met us at the top of the steps we wandered on under the pleasant shade of the apple trees till we found ourselves standing close to, and on a level with, the roof of the cathedral; a little bridge over one end of the roof connected our path with its continuation on the other side, and by its means we were able to follow the whole round of the ancient wall, which, built with long flat stones, still encircles the monastic dell within the stronger and higher wall of the fortifications built of brick by Peter the Great. Among the fruit trees was an aged oak; the schoolmaster assured us that it was five hundred years old. Part way up the wooden steps we had paused to look down on the roof of the monastic bathing establishment, which was apparently a large and commodious one. There is room in the monastery for five hundred monks, but just now there are not more than half that number; they spend much of their time in fishing. After we had completed the circuit of the inner wall we walked round the fortifications and had a look at the moat at the spot where, in former days, the monks used to let down a drawbridge to receive approaching guests. Moving a few yards away I made a rough sketch of the scene before me. From the point I had chosen, I could see the fortress walls, like two sides of a right angle; three of the bastions were visible; the high walls enclosed a forest of luxuriant tree tops, in the centre of which, and a little above them, sparkled the three golden crosses of the cathedral cupolas, which had caught the rays of the sun,

now rapidly sinking behind me. We then returned to the inn on the opposite side of the fortress, passing on the way a small modern chapel, with its whitewashed walls built into the side of the old fortress wall. A man at the top of a high ladder was engaged in laying a fresh coat of bright green paint upon the bulbous cupola of a church near the inn, with the aid of a mop-like brush tied on to the end of a long pole.

Our lunch at the inn was brought to us upon a tray by the grey-robed monk; it consisted of a plate of boiled rice, two slices of coarse black bread and two large basins, full, one of a kind of onion broth, hot, and not unpalatable, the other of a cold brown liquid—*kvas*—with bits of raw cucumber floating on its surface. The monk watched us taste these dainties with a sarcastic look on his face, and before leaving us expressed a hope that we should be satisfied with our monastic fare.

I have omitted to mention that while we were exploring the church-filled hollow earlier in the day we sat for some time on a shady seat about half-way up the long flight of steps, and that a monk passing stopped to have a chat with us. He was a dirty-looking creature, with a crop of thick curls that hung round his head in a bush, but his conversation was intelligent enough. He spoke of the progress of the war, of the state of politics in Europe, of the birth of a Czarévitch, and of many other topics of interest to the outside world. He was quite confident that, should Russia find herself hard pressed and in need of an active ally, she would find a faithful friend in Germany. Of France, as a friend in need, he had rather a poor opinion.

The schoolmaster had refused to accept any remuneration for his services as a guide, but we were asked to give a trifle towards the expenses of the village school. The donations of pilgrims towards this end were entered in a book kept for the purpose.

While waiting at the Pechora station for the train to take us back to Pskoff in the evening, we learned how Russians of the middle class manage to eat eggs without the

aid of egg-cups; a respectably dressed pilgrim, who had ordered half a dozen eggs, tapped a small hole in the top of each, and drank down its contents like a liqueur; in this fashion he made quick work of the lot. Chatting with us afterwards he said that he came from Samara. "Everything is better in Samara," he said, "*everything*. The weather is better, the corn is better; only the water-melons are not so good as last year. Ah! this is a poor country compared with Samara."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SETUKESE ESTS OF PECHORA.

The town of Pechora—Since the days of Truvor—National type—No ethnographical separation—Former Catholics—The Est language—Livonian Ests—The greatest living authority—Folk-lore—Dr. Hurst's labours—"Rubbish and Gossip"—"Origines Livoniæ"—A priest's testimony—Administration—Isborskaya Volost—Ailments—Character—No written literature—A girl's dowry—A mother's objection to schools—Dress—Chief occupation—Old horses—Scorn for fishermen—Weaving—Hunting—Disappearance of forest land—A national failing—A remarkable fact—Music—The harp; its supposed origin—General characteristics—Want of tact—Their greatest fault.

THE town of Pechora, which has derived its name, like the Pechorsky monastery, from the catacombs described in the preceding chapter, lies on the old military road which connects Pskoff with Riga. Besides the fact that it is the station for the monastery, it has another point of interest—an ethnographical one; it is the centre of a little people called the Setukese, the purest branch of the Est family now in existence. The Ests, roundly speaking, are to be found chiefly in Esthonia and in the northern half of Livonia, and there are Est colonies in almost every part of Russia; but the Esthonian and Livonian Ests have constantly changed rulers, they have been under the successive rule of Germans, Poles and Swedes; while the Setukese Ests have belonged to Russia ever since Truvor settled at Isborsk in 862. They are descended from the eastern branch of the Verro-Ests, but must have diverged from them long before the time of Truvor. Their interest for the ethnologist lies in the fact that their language and customs have so long remained unchanged; a result of

their nationality, and their faith. In the present day, when Russia has once more united the entire Est family under her sway, their separation is merely an administrative one. The Setukese are in the government of Pskoff, while the Verro-Ests belong to that of Livonia; in national type and language there has never been any ethnological separation; these are practically one and the same, with only the difference of pronunciation, and a greater richness of vocabulary in the case of the Setukese—a result of Russian influence. The Setukese have belonged to the Greco-Russian Church ever since the introduction of Christianity. There is no trace of their ever having belonged either to the Lutheran, or to the Roman Catholic faith, except in one instance; the boundary between Russia and Livonia was at one time rather more to the east; when it was moved, a strip of land containing Catholic peasants became Russian, and its inhabitants became members of the Orthodox church; these still retain a few traces of their former faith.

Separated from the Russians by nationality, the Setukese have lived side by side with them in friendly intercourse. The men understand but little Russian, and the women and children none at all; among themselves they speak the Est language. Marriages between Russians and Setukese are very rare. In Pechora, where the priest has a parish of some three thousand souls, there are about two such marriages in twenty-three years; they are objected to by both peoples; each considers itself superior to the other. When asked why she did not dress like the Russian women, a Setukese replied: "We have always dressed like this, and our mothers did so before us. The holy Maria wore this dress, it would be sinful to change it." The Livonian Ests look down upon their Setukese neighbours on account of their ignorance and want of education, but the gulf between them is bridged over to a certain extent by their unity of language, and the Setukese men have at last adopted the dress of the Livonians.

Our interest in the Ests led, fortunately for us, to our making the acquaintance of the greatest living authority on the subject of this singular people—the Rev. Doctor Jacob Hurst, and it is to that gentleman that I am indebted for most of my knowledge of the subject. Dr. Hurst, who was till quite recently the pastor of one of the largest Lutheran churches in St. Petersburg, has devoted all his spare time and energy to the collection of Esthonian folk-lore, direct from the lips of the people. While yet a student at the university of Dorpat he not only became fired with zeal for this labour of love, but succeeded in kindling a similar enthusiasm amongst his relations and friends, who willingly assisted him in his researches. Himself an Esthonian by birth, Dr. Hurst founded the Esthonian Literary Society at Dorpat, and was its president for ten years. Under his auspices a collection of folk-lore was begun by the society; it was bequeathed to Dr. Hurst at the dissolution of the society and formed a nucleus of fourteen volumes for that enthusiastic ethnologist's life collection. In the year 1888, Dr. Hurst inserted an appeal in the daily papers that those who had opportunity to gather Esthonian folk-lore would come to his aid. The response was immediate. Contributions began to pour in from all parts of Esthonia, from people of every rank; university men, students, schoolboys, pupils of seminaries, artisans, farmers, peasants, all began to help with a will; amongst them were also some women and girls. Contributions arrived from every part of Russia where Ests were to be found, from the government of St. Petersburg, from Saratoff, from Samara, the Caucasus, and the Crimea. A happy idea soon struck Dr. Hurst; he requested all the contributors to send him their photographs, and in the year 1896, he could boast of possessing in his album of folk-lore one hundred and eight photographs, which are not without their interest for anthropologists. All the work has been done gratuitously; no pay has been asked or given. As Dr. Hurst found it impossible to answer each contributor separately, he inserted in

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Pastor Hurst, D.D., of St. Petersburg.

[*To face page* 186.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

the newspapers a periodical list of matter received, with the names of the senders. These acknowledgments appeared three times a week at first, and afterwards once a month.

Later on, a few friends having undertaken to pay their expenses, Dr. Hurst sent several young men, teachers of the Dorpat High School, into the various localities during their holiday time, to make a closer research. The sum of £80 was spent in this way. According to Dr. Hurst's testimony, "they worked like so many ants among the quiet villages." There were, of course, difficulties to be overcome. Some of the villagers thought it would be a sin to repeat old superstitions and sayings, and feared the devil would take them if they were heard upon their lips; others thought it waste of time to collect "such rubbish and gossip," while others again held still, in the innermost recesses of their hearts, to the old beliefs and superstitions of their ancestors, and were for that very reason jealous of their traditions and anxious to guard them from inquisitive intruders. On the whole, however, the Ests were remarkably ready to communicate all they could, and the fact that the request came from one of their own people made their willingness all the greater.

There is, of course, an Esthonian literature, of which the "Origines Livoniæ," written by a Lett priest called Heinrich, is the most noted, but it is nothing more than a description of wars and battles. The real life of the people, their life in times of peace, is barely touched upon. The chronicles collected by Dr. Hurst and his helpers from the lips of the people fill up the gaps in their history, describing their joys, their sorrows, their pleasures and their pains. Here we have a vivid portrayal of their doings, their sufferings, their loves, their hates, their hopes and their fears. Their folk-lore shows them as they are, it does not flatter.

It was as recently as the summer of 1903, that Dr. Hurst devoted eight weeks to ethnological research among the Setukese of Pechora. Making the town of Pechora his

centre, he made excursions into the neighbouring villages. He studied the habits and customs peculiar to the Setukese, and while examining into the state of their intellectual culture, took down from their lips a great number of folk-songs. From the lips of two women alone he gathered thirty-one thousand five hundred and twenty verses. The doctor at the cottage hospital was able to furnish many interesting particulars, so also the village priest, who had much information to give respecting the spiritual and moral condition of the people. But the chief source of information was the people themselves. Dr. Hurst's perfect command of their language, and the fact that this was his fourth visit, enabled him to mingle with them almost as one of themselves. On his return to St. Petersburg he read a paper before the Geographical Society on the results of his investigations; the paper was afterwards printed, and as our friend kindly presented us with a copy, I give some interesting particulars from it.

The Administration of the Setukese district is divided into four *Volosts*, the *Slobodskaya* on the north, the *Pankovitza* on the south, the *Pechorskaya* on the west, and the *Isborskaya* in the centre, and on the east. The last named *Volost* contains very few Setukese, its population being chiefly Russian. With regard to its physical aspect the Setukese country is for the most part flat and sandy, with here and there great stretches of marsh land. Its trees are chiefly the needle pine. The country to the south-west is hilly, the hills forming an extension of the Livonian chain. Here there are fewer marshes, their place being taken by picturesque undulations and clumps of leafy trees; there is nothing, however, to deserve the name of forest; in the *Isborskaya Volost* the land is practically bare of trees. In the neighbourhood of Pechora, especially to the west of that town, the clay soil holds water long on its surface, and has therefore earned the epithet of *Mokroe*, or "damp" land. The southern portion, as a result of its physical advantages, is the most fruitful, and is more thickly populated: the climate is

very healthy. The complaints most frequently treated at the cottage hospital are such as result entirely from the national habits and propensities of the people: uncleanliness and poor food are the main causes of their skin and stomach troubles; phthisis is hardly known among them, and fevers are very rare. With regard to dress, that of the women corresponds with that which was worn by the early Finns, if we may judge by the coloured pictures of the Finnish National Epic—the *Kalevala*—which were prepared after careful research.

If the Ests as a people exhibit one particular trait of character more than any other it is stubbornness, and it is this very quality which has kept the Setukese together as a people, and prevented the influence of Russia from penetrating below the surface. The Setukese have their own national festivities, in which their Russian neighbours, being unacquainted with their language, can only join as spectators. These festivities are called *Kirmas*, the word is of German origin from *Kirch-mess*, and reached them through the medium of Russia. The Setukese are zealous and conscientious members of the Orthodox church: the steadfast side of their character shows itself here. Nevertheless, the Russians have called them—and not without some truth—*half-believers*. Seeing that their knowledge of the Russian language is very limited, they neither understand the church services nor the Bible when it is read to them. Even their priest cannot speak to them in their own language; consequently their religion consists in the performance of enjoined ceremonies, in the keeping of fasts, and in eye-worship. Dr. Hurst found that very few of them were even acquainted with the Lord's Prayer; those who knew it had learned it from their Livonian neighbours. A learned priest who had studied the Setukese language tried on one occasion to preach to them in it, but met with so poor a result that he abandoned the idea.

The Setukese have no written literature, consequently there is nothing to distract their minds from the old songs,

proverbs, and tales, that have been handed down to them from one generation to another with such marvellous zeal and devotion. The traditions of their fathers are in reality their only spiritual food; but many and excellent are the moral truths contained in these outpourings of the Setukese heart. It is from their folk-lore that these people derive their daily rule of life, their incentive to good works, their encouragement, and their comfort in times of trouble. That which comes from the heart reaches to the heart.

The woman is the centre and stay of the family; she knows the worth of what she has been taught, guards it jealously for her children, and hands it down to them intact. Young girls must have their memory well stocked with folk-lore if they would stand well in the eyes of their neighbours. "Without our folk-lore," said a Setukese mother to Dr. Hurst, "no girl goes forth to a new home; the bride takes with her a memory stocked with verses; her dowry consists of the priceless wisdom that is locked up in her breast."

Schools there are none among the Setukese, or rather, there were none till the last few years, and those that have been established are unpopular, because the teaching is not carried on in their mother tongue. "Why should I send my children to school?" said a Setukese mother. "If a pig meets a lamb they cannot understand each other, though the pig may grunt and the lamb bleat!" Dr. Hurst thinks it is a good thing that there is no compulsion, but he fears that until both church and school adopt the mother tongue the children will continue to grow up as heathen rather than Christians.

In stature the Setukese are somewhat short; their hair is usually very fair; in the songs their girls are described as "flaxen-haired birdlets." The figures of the women are well-proportioned and graceful; their dress consists of a long white linen garment with sleeves and neck embroidered with red stitching, worn under a sleeveless coat, generally of blue bordered with red; the coat

goes by different names, according to its colour and material; these two garments reach to the ankles, but no separate skirts are worn. Much jewellery is worn on the neck and breast, especially on great occasions, one article of ornament being a kind of round breast-plate, not unlike those formerly worn by Russian ladies, such as we saw in M. Plushkin's collection at Pskoff. Countless silver chains of various workmanship are worn round the neck, each being known by its particular name; silver coins and crosses are often attached to the chains: necklaces of glass beads are also much in favour. A rich woman will carry six or even seven pounds of silver, valuing as much as three hundred roubles (thirty pounds sterling). At home the girls go bareheaded, except in winter, when a handkerchief is worn; on festal occasions they wear a wreath made of ribbons, the ends of which hang down the back. Married women wear, indoors and out, a kind of hood, which is tied on tightly with red, green, or white strings; each string is of one long piece, and hangs down the back as far as the ankles. The hood completely conceals the hair, and is the special sign of a married woman, for unmarried ones never wear it. A coloured handkerchief is often worn over the hood out of doors. Aprons are universally worn, and are usually red in colour. In warm weather the women's dresses are entirely of white, so that in the distance they may easily be mistaken for a flock of geese. In winter their dress is generally of a half woollen material, with a red border and a green girdle. In very cold weather the women, as well as the men, wear white sheepskin coats, and over these yet another coat of white wool; though we call these garments white, in reality they soon become a dirty yellow. On the feet stockings are worn with sandals, but on festal occasions the sandals are replaced by shoes. The men's dress differs little from that of the Russian peasant.

A Setukese village is always very small, consisting of only two or three dwellings; there is none of the regularity of the Russian village; each man erects his own

house as he will, and he can have its front looking in whatever direction he pleases, quite independently of what his neighbours may be doing. In this respect a Setukese village resembles an Est village in the Baltic Provinces. A man usually decides on the position of his house according to the formation of the ground. The Setukese isbas are larger and always further apart than those of the Russians; the roofs are thatched with straw.

The chief occupation of the Setukese is agriculture. Their capability for this pursuit is quite equal to that of the Livonian Ests, but as their land is distributed like that of the Russians—according to souls—and is not their own, their prosperity never reaches so high a level. With regard to other pursuits, there is one way of earning a living that seems a favourite one of the Setukese; they buy up old horses and sell them for the worth of their skins and bones. It is a melancholy fact that in the interval between being purchased for the last time and being slaughtered, the horses are so ill-fed that they are sometimes reduced to eating one another's tails. Another pursuit is that of buying up old rags and selling them again to paper manufacturers. The Lake of Pskoff being quite near, the Setukese also engage in fishing, but most of this trade is done by the Russians, as the Setukese do not like water. Their folk-songs are full of the praises of agriculture, but fishing is either alluded to with scorn or passed over altogether. One song says: "On the water men are caught by fishes, as well as fishes by men." It is evident that Russia must look elsewhere among her subjects for the stuff that sailors are made of! Another song says: "The fisherman takes his winding-sheet with him to his work and leaves a weeping family at home, but the man who goes to work on the fields leaves a home full of laughter and singing."

The trade engaged in by the Setukese is of a most primitive kind. Of their industries, weaving is the most developed: in fact it well deserves the attention of connoisseurs. Hunting and bee-keeping are also engaged in, but hunting was far more popular in the old days,

when wolves abounded and were caught in pits. Several of the songs contain allusions to the hunting of the reindeer and the bear, but all this sort of thing disappeared along with the forests. When de Custine travelled in north Russia in 1839, he was alarmed at the amount of wood consumed in the stoves, and at the rapidity with which the forests were being cut down: he even foretold that scarcity of wood would eventually force the Russians to seek milder climes; and indeed in our own day we note the cutting down of large tracts of forests, and the country becoming bare and hideous for miles together; this is especially the case in Finland; the Norwegians and Swedes are far more careful of their wood.

In a Setukese family the father is traditionally the master of the house, and wife and children willingly obey him. Early marriages are arranged for the young people by their parents, the respective amount of worldly goods usually determining the choice. A girl looks upon the man selected by her parents as the husband designed for her by Providence, and is resigned to her fate, even if he is not quite the sort she would have chosen for herself. A song says: "You cannot escape the husband who has been created for you." Unfaithfulness is practically unknown, though the women are often very roughly handled, especially when their husbands are under the influence of drink, a national failing also alluded to in the songs. Filial piety is very great, and aged parents are cared for tenderly.

For weddings and funerals they have a great number of songs, but it is a remarkable fact that they do not contain the least trace of Christianity, though the Setukese have been Christians for more than a thousand years. Many of the songs are not understood even by the people themselves. The text, and not the meaning, is with them all important. The verses are recited with a kind of melodious rhythm, and never merge into what we call "sing-song": they are epic in character. The singers are almost exclusively women; one girl chants a verse, which is

then taken up and repeated by the others in a chorus. Prof. A. von Oettengen, who made researches among the Livonian Ests, pronounced their music to be in no way allied to that of the rest of Europe, but a kind peculiar to ancient times. It would be interesting and instructive to compare the *Urmelodien* of the Setukese with the national melodies of the Japanese, both being of Mongol origin. From time immemorial the national musical instrument of the Finns, of whom the Setukese are a tribe, has been the harp; this instrument is holy in their eyes. The Setukese believe that the Creator fashioned the first harp with His own hands; they call it "the beautiful instrument of Jesus," and allow no other instrument to be used at their Easter festivals. Contrary to our custom the harp playing of the Setukese is entirely confined to the men; the strings of the earliest harps are believed to have been of human hair, and later ones of metal.

The character of the Setukese, according to Dr. Hurst, is childish and naïve. Quarrels are quickly made up, pardon is asked on both sides, and there is no malice. Pity is shown for those in distress, and help is willingly given according to the people's means. These people are not devotees to cleanliness; houses and dress are decidedly dirty, except on festive occasions. Much of their language is coarse, but the coarseness arises from ignorance, and is in no way intentional. Dr. Hurst assures us that you never hear dreadful curses or bad words of any kind from the lips of a Setukese; he adds that he could not say the same of the Livonian Ests, or of the Russians.

One of their characteristics is a want of tact, occasioned by an insufficient tenderness for the feelings of others. They also show a weakness for going to law to settle disputes; the village priest summed them up as "honest, very coarse, and independent." Their greatest fault is their love of drink. Brandy is found in every cottage, and in recent years there has been a tendency to taking "ether" as an intoxicant; in 1892 a whole wedding party in a village of Slobodskaya fell victims to this drink. Robbery

and theft are not tolerated; if a thief is discovered, the whole village hands him over to the police; nevertheless, they do not see any harm in letting stolen horses pass through their hands on their way between Livonia and Russia; the majority are, it is true, against this evil practice, but the temptation is great, as the Setukese are between the two, and if horses are stolen they must pass their way.

CHAPTER XV.

ROSTOFF THE GREAT.

Origin—Introduction of Christianity—Difficulties met with—A hundred years later—The kremlin—Uspensky church—Relics of early days—A remarkable belfry—The largest bell—Other churches—The museum—Samovars—A *vêtchun*—Boyars' caps—The lake—The palace of Philaret—An interesting convent—How the nuns support themselves—A nun's adopted daughter—Our hotel; Waiters—At the railway station; Bound for Manchuria.

SOME two hundred versts from Moscow, on the Yaroslav railway leading to Yaroslav and Kostroma, lies Rostoff, one of Russia's oldest towns. It is supposed that it was founded by colonists from Novgorod before the ninth century, but the exact date is not known. Nestor speaks of Rostoff in the opening pages of his chronicle, classing with it Novgorod, Bielozersk, and Polotsk, and it is also mentioned in the treaty made by Oleg with the Greeks in 907. It had a prince of its own under the suzerainty of Oleg. When Vladimir wished to convert his pagan country to Christianity he met with more opposition at Rostoff than anywhere else. Before the Slav colony took root upon the north-western shore of Lake Rostoff, the spot had been the home of a Finnish tribe, and in Vladimir's time these had not yet been absorbed by the new comers; it is not surprising that, in repelling the new religion, they showed the stubbornness peculiar to their race. Vladimir sent his son Boris to reside at Rostoff, that he might influence the inhabitants in favour of Christianity, and Boris took with him the first Greek bishops, Theodore and Ilarion, but they could not withstand the fury of the pagans, and "fled from the unbelief and provoking ob-

stinacy" of the people they had come to convert. In 1024, when there was famine in the land, the Finnish magicians and sorcerers stirred up the inhabitants of Rostoff to drive away the Christians. It was then that Yaroslav the Brave came himself to that neighbourhood and caused many of the sorcerers to be executed, but even he was unable to make the people receive the Christian faith; finally it was Leonto, a bishop placed there in the reign of Yaroslav, who, by his gentle kindliness, succeeded in drawing the children and young people to the new religion; but Leonto was not allowed to continue the work he had begun; he was soon put to death by the parents of the young people he had influenced. The bishop who succeeded Leonto in the reign of Monomachus, built a church at Rostoff, and founded the town of Vladimir; he also built churches in various other centres, and did much towards the spread of Christianity; yet, after his death, in 1091, the people of Rostoff once more returned to their old beliefs. In 1095, when Mstislav, the son of Monomachus, held sway over Rostoff, a bishop of the name of Abraham saw his efforts and those of his predecessors at last crowned with success; he succeeded in persuading the people to throw down their idol *Veless* and build a monastery on the spot where the idol had stood. A hundred years later Rostoff was one of the strongholds of Christianity in Russia, and to-day its fine old churches and monasteries give a better idea of what the Greek church was in Russia during the Middle Ages than any others I have visited. No student of the history of the Orthodox church in the Czar's dominions should omit a visit to the churches of Rostoff.

Within the kremlin, surrounded by an old dentated wall with ten bastions, stand the royal palace, the archbishop's palace, and five churches. The churches were considered superfluous after the year 1787, when the archbishopric was transferred to Yaroslav, and the kremlin walls were no longer thought worthy of repair; the royal palace and the archbishop's palace were turned into distilleries and store-houses. Even the most beautiful of the

churches was desecrated, its windows were smashed, and its wrought-iron gates badly damaged. Yet there still remains enough of the old grandeur to give the traveller a fair idea of Rostoff's former greatness, and of the magnificence she must have displayed in the days when, like her mother republic, Novgorod, she too was called "the Great."*

The Uspensky church was founded in the tenth century; the original church, which was of wood, was pulled down and replaced by the present one of stone; it was begun in 1213 and finished in 1231; in this edifice are the tombs of the three bishops who had such hard work to convert the people of Rostoff. The interior is covered with paintings; the roof is supported by four massive square pillars, elephantine in comparison to the size of the church, which they appear to choke. A chasuble, in a frame and covered with glass, was pointed out to us as that worn by one of the early bishops more than seven hundred years ago. A chalice, fourteen feet high, and a wooden bowl, three feet in diameter, attracted our attention. The bowl was filled with beeswax, in which a little wick, six inches long, is always kept burning. It was in this church that we saw an ikon representing the Virgin Mary, which was painted by a famous ikon artist at Kieff in the eleventh century; the gold work is all on the glass, the actual picture being laid beneath it. The innermost iron door of the principal entrance to this church has a remarkable double lock of enormous proportions, two feet in width, and three-quarters of a yard in height; the bolts of the lock are two inches across and two and a half inches high.

Close to the cathedral stands an oblong belfry, with four cupolas, containing an interesting peal of bells, erected in the seventeenth century; there are thirteen bells in all, renowned for their harmonious and "warbling" tones. In their palmy days they used to play three ancient Russian hymn tunes, but these got

* As far as I know, this chapter contains the first account of a visit to Rostoff by a foreigner that has ever been published. The reader must not confound it with Rostoff on the Don, which is a very different place, and one of purely commercial interest.

Interior of Uspensky Cathedral, Rostoff.

[*To face page* 198.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

out of order and were never heard during the nineteenth century; quite recently, however, they have once more been put in order and made to play one of the old tunes. The largest bell weighs two thousand puds, and was cast at Rostoff.

All the other churches in and near the kremlin are worth a visit, especially that called *Rojdestva Christoff*, which stands close to the old kremlin wall; it is faced with Dutch tiles covered with stucco-work, and has a remarkable iron gateway dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, and covered with emblematic figures. We passed through this gate to visit the historical museum that now occupies the old palace, which has been carefully restored. The building itself is extremely interesting, with its vaulted ceilings, its narrow, dark staircases, its low doorways and its old Russian attics. One room in the museum contains many curious household utensils, dating from the fifteenth century; here we were able to study the development of the samovar,* from its original shape to that of the present day. There were also some copper vessels for boiling herbs and extracting their medicinal properties; wooden pitchers and goblets; ancient salt-boxes; two-handled tubs, called *dratinie*, and copper vessels with a division, so that two things could be boiled at once; spinning-wheels; money chests; spoons; and such like. Here, too, were more of the quaint wooden candle-stands described in the chapter on Tver, and here, also, we found, what we had not seen anywhere else, a *vĕtchun*; this was the trunk and the branching roots of a young tree, fashioned into a strange-looking wand, or staff, the antler-like head of which was the root, the tree being carried upside down. This remarkable staff was carried by the town-crier when he summoned the citizens to the National Assembly, or *vetché*; for it must be remembered that, like Novgorod and Pskoff, Rostoff was also a proud republic at the time of her earliest prosperity. In another room we found a collection of pearl-stitched boyars' caps, women's ornaments

* The word *samovar* means self-boiling.

and jewellery; and costumes of rich damask and satin worn by the wealthy citizens of Rostoff in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they were similar to those we had seen in the museums of Novgorod and Pskoff. Ascending by a narrow staircase to the higher rooms in the palace, we were rewarded with a fine view of the country round, and of the beautiful lake. I have spoken at length in another chapter of the vegetable gardening for which Rostoff is so deservedly famed. From our point of vantage we could now see the whole sweep of gardens round the lake and the little steamers crossing its calm surface. A venerable monastery, built upon a little promontory jutting out into the water, added to the interest of the scene.

The town contains several other stone churches, besides those already mentioned, dating from the seventeenth century; these, too, were built to replace older ones of wood. A traveller from Western Europe, who visited Russia in the sixteenth century, stated on his return home that the Russian churches, palaces and public buildings, as well as the ordinary dwelling-houses, were built entirely of wood; he was not perfectly correct, for stone churches and palaces had even then begun to take the place of the old wooden ones; still, it is to the before-mentioned fact that wood was so extensively used as a building material in the early days of Russian history that there is so little that can be called old for the traveller's eye to rest on in the present day. At Rostoff there is only one room left of the wooden palace of Philaret, the father of the first of the Romanoff czars, but of the old wooden churches many of the carved doors have been preserved; there is a remarkable collection of them in the Rostoff museum; one in particular attracted our attention; it was covered with carvings of half life-size figures of apostles, whose long hair and noble features were typically Russian. These doors are not all that has been preserved of the old wooden churches; the ikons, of which every museum in Russia has a supply, and the old church decorations, are there too, and remind us as we look at them that the

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Monastery at Rostoff the Great.

View of Rostoff the Great.

[*To face page* 201.

history of Christianity in Russia goes farther back than that of the earliest of her stone churches.

In the centre of the town there is a convent for women founded in 1395. One of the Rostoff princesses, who died in 1474, is buried there. The building forms three sides of a square and has a small garden in the centre; it has two chapels, the most interesting of which is the low vaulted one on the ground floor, to reach which we had to pass through the nuns' dining hall; its roof is supported in the centre by a single pillar three yards square, in itself a curiosity. On the handsome flight of steps leading to the upper and more modern chapel we found a group of nuns industriously polishing up some brass church vessels. One of these ladies took us to see her cell and from her we learned that all the nuns supported themselves by the sale of their own handiwork; some did plain-sewing, others went in for crochet work; some of them were very poor; these were sent to the town hospital when ill; but the richer ones remained in their cells and had a doctor to attend them. It was the opinion of the nun who acted as our cicerone that the convent was overcrowded, and that the nuns fell ill oftener than would be the case if they had more space; yet her room, or cell, which we were now invited to enter, looked airy and comfortable. A nun, who lived in the adjoining apartment, introduced us to a gaily dressed young girl whom she had adopted as a tiny child and brought up in the convent; the child was a penniless orphan and the nun had adopted her out of sheer kindness of heart. I asked the girl if she, too, would be a nun in time, but she said "No" with such determination that it was clear she had no leaning towards the monastic life. Perhaps she had seen too much of it.

Our hotel at Rostoff was purely Russian, though it rejoiced in the name of "The London," like the one we had stayed at in Pskoff. It was a long, two-storeyed rambling place, with small rooms, and windows which could not be opened; the only fresh air we got came through a small round hole cut in one of the panes, about the size of a

walnut. Russians of the lower class are quite superstitious about letting fresh air into their rooms; they treat it as if it were loaded with deadly infection. A Russian lady residing in Yaroslav, who takes much interest in the people, told me that if anyone remonstrated with them for not letting the fresh air into their rooms they would reply: "Why should we make holes in the street?" They felt sure that if holes *were* made evil spirits would come in. The interior of the hotel was neat enough, and its floors were covered with parquetry. The walls of the long passage were papered with wall paper of which the pattern consisted of blue and white squares, each white square ornamented with a green four-leaved shamrock. Three dining-rooms were filled with men and women of the petty tradesman class, who were all chatting and smoking contentedly over their innocent glass of tea.* We had got into the heart of Russia at last, and, had the air been such as we could breathe, we should have liked nothing better than to join these good people at their tea, but as it was, we hurried on, after a glance at the beautiful silver hair of many of the old men.

The Slav waiters were dressed in long white overalls, and their hair hung round their heads in yellow tufts, about which shade of colour there was nothing Asiatic. They did their best to make us comfortable, but the air was indescribable, and before daylight we had discovered that we were not the only occupants of our room. If we ever spend another day at Rostoff we shall leave it before nightfall. As it was we left the hotel at daybreak and drove to the station when we wanted lunch. While we were partaking of that meal a train came in, full of shock-headed reservists destined for Manchuria. The young officer who was taking them out sat down near us to eat a hurried dinner; between the courses we got into conversasion, and he told us that there were one thousand men in the train, thirty to forty in each carriage, that there was

* See Besant's "London in the Time of the Tudors," for a similar custom; men and women smoking together.

a stove to every carriage where the men could cook and boil the water for their tea, but that they were to dine at the stations they stopped at, and meals were to be provided for them in the third-class refreshment rooms of the Siberian railway stations en route. "It will take us twenty-three days, at the rate we are going, to get from Moscow to Mukden," said the officer; and then he added, with a sad look, "What awaits us there?" In fifteen minutes the train had passed on and the station was quiet once more. We remained there till the arrival of the evening train which was to carry us on to Yaroslav, our next stopping-place.

CHAPTER XVI.

YAROSLAV AND KOSTROMA.

Origin of Yaroslav—English merchants—Church of St. Elias—The Demidoff Lyceum—Its director—Historical ground—Dutch weavers—Ancient ikons—Paying toll—First theatre in Russia—Sketch of the founder's life—Difficulties—The Russian Garrick—Volkoff's success—Popular enthusiasm—An "all-round" man—At St. Petersburg—Going to school—First theatre in the capital—Moscow—Catherine II. and the theatre—Memorial tablet—Volkoff's likeness to Peter the Great—His plays—Bobrikoff and Plehve—Boulevard on the banks of the Volga—Passengers to Archangel—An avenue of birch trees—First sight of Kostroma—The Ipatieff monastery—Marfa, the wife of Philaret—Coronation of Michael—"There's his doll!"—Reservists—Oldest church in Kostroma—A thank-offering—Kostroma in the seventeenth century—*A Life for the Czar*—Glinka—The prettiest spot on the Volga.

YAROSLAV, one of the most important towns upon the upper Volga, lies on the right bank of that river at the point where it is joined by a smaller stream, the Kotorosl, which has its origin in Lake Rostoff. It was on the spot, we are told, upon which Yaroslav the Brave had killed a she-bear, that he founded in his joy the town which bears his name.* The town dates from the early part of the twelfth century; it was taken by the Tatars in 1238.

* History repeats itself. While we were at Yaroslav the English newspapers announced that the Kaiser had shot a magnificent buck at Rominton, weighing 374 German pounds. "The Kaiser's joy at his feat was so great that he founded a charity for the inhabitants of Rominton Heath by making them a gift of 28,000 marks." I must add however that, according to the latest theory, Yaroslav never killed a bear at Yaroslav at all, but overthrew an idol with a name resembling the Russian word for a bear, which was worshipped by the Finnish tribes dwelling in that part, and founded the town on the spot where the idol had stood.

There are seventy-five churches, several of which are worth a visit, but as most of them were built between the years 1646 and 1725, they are of less historical interest than those of Rostoff. Money to build them was liberally subscribed by the wealthy merchants of that neighbourhood who had made their fortunes by extensive commerce, both with Asia by way of the Volga, and with Europe by way of Archangel, where the English colony before alluded to had been founded towards the end of the sixteenth century. English merchants also, made a good deal of money out of their Archangel trade; so much, indeed, that the Russians began to cast about for an excuse to rid themselves of their prosperous visitors. They found what they considered to be a very ample one in the decapitation of Charles I., and the Czar was persuaded to turn the English out of Archangel for having put their king to death.*

The church of St. Elias was built by the sons and grandsons of the rich merchants who migrated to Yaroslav from Novgorod at the time of the latter town's misfortunes. The seventeenth century frescoes, with which its interior is covered, are remarkable for the variety of the subjects they portray. But the oldest and most interesting church in Yaroslav is the Nicola Mokrinsky, built in 1665 on the banks of the Kotorosl. Its interior has happily been left as it was built, and here we have a rare specimen of the purely Russian style of architecture: its archways are covered with blue and green Dutch tiles, which have the effect of enamel at a little distance. Its quaint entrance and long vaulted passages covered with frescoes, its gabled roofs, its green tiles, and its equally quaint bell tower, interested us greatly.

Apart from her churches, the most imposing structure in Yaroslav is the Demidoff Lyceum of Jurisprudence. The Demidoff family have their estate in this government, and it was in 1803, during the reign of Alexander I., that Paul Demidoff gave two hundred thousand roubles

* We turned the French residents out of England during the French revolution for a similar reason.

towards what was at first a Philosophical Faculty, but was changed in 1834 to a Faculty of National Economy, and finally, in 1870, to a Faculty of Jurisprudence, modelled on the plan of a similar institution at Dijon. Besides the interest of the original capital, the Lyceum also receives support from the State. The building contains, as well as its lecture halls and class rooms, a suite of rooms in which the director and his family reside, and a chapel and a library for the students. There are eight professors, and a number of other teachers. At present there are six hundred and sixty pupils, who have come from all parts of Russia; more than fifty per cent. of the students are the sons of priests, who have already passed through the seminaries. It was, I believe, in a room in this building that Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace wrote the best book on Russia that has as yet appeared in our language. The Lyceum stands upon historical ground, upon the site of the palace of Yaroslav the Brave. From its back window there is a view of the elevation called "The Hill of Sorrow," where Nikon died while on his journey back to Moscow after his banishment; a church now marks the spot. Near it stands the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which was built as a Lutheran church for the Dutch weavers whom Peter the Great brought over from Holland, but is now Orthodox. A little to its right stands a handsome church of the seventeenth century, the church of St. John the Baptist, built upon the site of an old wooden one which had been burned down by the Poles; it has fifteen cupolas and a beautiful bell tower, which leans a little to one side after the manner of the tower of Pisa. It has, like the others, an interior covered with fresco paintings; its walls are a yard and a half thick. In the little chapel by its side we found a very large ikon representing the head of the Virgin Mary; it was circular in form, and measured ten feet in diameter; although not more than three hundred years old, it appeared to have turned nearly black with age, and, sad to relate, the heat from a gigantic stove placed in the wall behind had caused it to crack

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Uspensky Cathedral and bell-tower, Rostoff.

[*To face page* 207.

woefully. There were several ancient ikons in the church itself, the peculiarity of these was that they were a mass of pearls and precious stones. In one of them the angel's wings were represented by pearl embroidery—each stitch a pearl—and its coloured border by rubies. When we raised our eyes to the lofty interior of the largest cupola it was startling to find a huge devil with a cat's face peering out from a background of flames and glaring down upon us,—instead of the usual representation of Christ raising His hand in the act of benediction. In the middle of the church there were two massive pillars; the altar was separated from the body of the building by a brick wall: to the right of the altar was the sacristy, to the left the sacrificial altar; on three sides the church was surrounded by galleries. To reach the churches I have been describing, we had to drive out across the river Kotorosl to a kind of suburb. A toll of two kopecks was charged each time we crossed the floating raft used as a bridge, and there seemed a likelihood of our droshki getting stuck in the mud, which was plentiful on either side of it, but happily our fears proved groundless.

The first theatre in Russia* was erected at Yaroslav, and opened in the year 1750. Its founder, and the first actor who appeared on its boards, were one and the same man—Theodore Gregorévitch Volkoff,—the Russian Garrick. He was born in the year 1725 at Kostroma. His father, a thriving tradesman, died when the boy was five years old; his mother married again very soon, and, as their stepfather, Polutchkin, was a citizen of Yaroslav, Theodore and his four little brothers were taken there to live. Polutchkin was a rich man, the owner of a leather factory and of some important saltpetre works; he was one of the foremost merchants of his town, and was greatly respected by his fellow

* German actors visited Russia and performed there in the year 1670. Italians performed there in 1730. Before the era of Peter the Great the only dramatic representations exhibited in Russia were Scriptural ones got up by the monks in the monasteries of Kieff and Moscow. We are told that Tooptalo, the learned Archbishop of Rostoff, was highly distinguished as a composer of Scriptural dramas. See Harigold.

citizens for his upright dealings and his good common sense, in spite of the fact that his education as a boy had been neglected and that he could neither read nor write. He was an exceptionally kind step-father, treating his wife's children by her former marriage as if they had been his own. He made much of young Volkoff, who, from his earliest years, showed great aptitude for drawing and music; of the latter art the boy was passionately fond. Pastor Bēron, an exile living at Yaroslav, was the child's first instructor, not only in drawing and music but also in the German language, which his pupil acquired so thoroughly that he spoke it as easily as his native tongue. Volkoff's education was continued at an academy at Moscow, where he saw acting for the first time, and where he acquired his passion for the play. At the age of fourteen, having outstripped his companions in every branch of study, he returned home "one of the best educated people of his time," and was given a share in his step-father's business. But the boy's heart did not go out to buying and selling. Very soon he was sent to St. Petersburg to look after some business transactions for the firm. Without neglecting his work, he found opportunity to frequent the Italian opera, and to study the *mise en scène* of several famous operas; he made the acquaintance of the actors and was thus enabled to get behind the scenes. He studied stage decoration as well as the art of acting, and then there came to him, like an inspiration, the idea of founding a theatre at Yaroslav, a theatre which should be a source of education and enlightenment to his fellow citizens. In the year 1747 his step-father died, and Volkoff had to take his place at the head of the business. Being now his own master and at liberty to follow his inclinations, Volkoff turned his thoughts energetically towards the goal he had in view. His enthusiasm gained him the entire sympathy of his younger brothers; they began to act plays, under Volkoff's direction, before the workpeople in their factories, with the result that the attention of the employees was drawn from their work to a degree not

altogether satisfactory from a money-making point of view. But Volkoff's mind was too much set upon the theatre he dreamed of founding, to count the cost. Things finally got to such a pass that the step-sister, the daughter of Polutchkin by a previous marriage, who had a considerable share in the profits, brought an action against the brothers for ruining the business by turning the workpeople into actors. During the proceedings of the law case it transpired, from information obtained from the workpeople, that the business had been brought very low indeed, if not to actual shipwreck. Several years passed before a decision was given, and then it was pronounced in favour of the brothers Volkoff; but in 1754 the step-sister succeeded in getting herself recognised by the law as the only rightful heir of Polutchkin, and the brothers were all excluded from the business.

After many rehearsals in their own rooms the brothers decided to perform before the public for the first time in a large leather warehouse; here they erected a modest stage, the decorations for which they had made with their own hands. The public, who were admitted without payment, were held spellbound by the talented performance of the self-trained actors. That evening witnessed the birth of the National Russian theatre. The play then performed was the first ever performed by Russian actors. The people of Yaroslav soon begged for a repetition of the pleasure they had received, and the first performance in the warehouse was followed by many more, but its accommodation was found to be far too small for its crowded audiences, and Volkoff began to feel that the time had come to build a proper theatre. Being now a poor man and unable to furnish the necessary funds, he made an appeal to his fellow citizens for support. A handsome sum was soon collected from willing subscribers, and under the direction of Volkoff, a wooden theatre, capable of seating a thousand spectators, was erected on the banks of the Volga. Volkoff showed his marvellous versatility by becoming architect, engineer and scene-painter, all in

turn. When the theatre was ready, he became, not only managing director, play writer and translator of foreign plays, but also director of the orchestra, and chief actor. The theatre was opened in the spring of 1751. Twenty-five kopecks (sixpence) was charged for the chairs, and five kopecks (a penny-farthing) for the lower gallery; the upper gallery was less expensive. The first evening had for its programme an Italian opera, translated by Volkoff, and there soon followed a comedy from the same pen. Unfortunately not one of his own compositions has been preserved. The fame of Volkoff and his theatre soon spread to other towns besides Yaroslav, and at last reached the ears of the Empress Elizabeth. The little troupe of actors received a command from their Sovereign to appear at Court. We are told that the party, forty in number, after having been provided by a Captain of the Guards with warm furs, travelled by *post-troika* (a three-horse carriage) to St. Petersburg, and on two occasions, in the months of February and March, 1752, had the honour of playing before the Empress and her family at the Winter Palace, the public not being admitted. The Empress was delighted with their talent, and commanded them to settle permanently at St. Petersburg. At a second performance, when one of the young actors, the son of a Yaroslav priest, had taken a woman's part in a tragedy and was preparing to leave the stage, the Empress placed a necklace of diamonds round his neck with her own hands. The youth thus honoured eventually became the most celebrated actor in Russia, and lived to have his praises sung, not only in the streets of his native country, but also in those of Paris and London. The Empress insisted on their all attending lectures at the School of Cadets in order that their general education might be improved; accordingly they were received there as pupils and studied literature, foreign languages, and declamation, besides attending science lectures with the other pupils. Some curious documents relating to their two years at the Cadets' School have been preserved. Their education completed, the

young actors left the school on August 3rd, 1756, and it was at that juncture that three young ladies, who had also been training for the stage, joined Volkoff's party, so that the men had no longer to take the women's parts. It was not long before the newcomers became the wives of Volkoff and two of his brothers respectively. The newly-erected theatre stood on the banks of the Neva, close to where the Academy of Painters now stands. Patronised by the Empress, it was recognised as a government institution, and Volkoff was installed as first Court Actor. In 1756 he was sent, in company with another actor, to found a theatre at Moscow, but did not stay there long, as his whole heart was in his theatre at St. Petersburg. There he and his companions continued to act with great success throughout the reign of Elizabeth; and when that Empress was succeeded by Catherine II., they found in her an equally zealous patroness. "The theatre," said Catherine, "is the school of the people, and of course it must be under my protection. I am the head teacher in that school, and I have to answer before God for the morals of my subjects." The coronation ceremonies were scarcely over before the energetic and fruitful life of Volkoff came to an untimely end; he was carried off by disease before he had reached his prime, and died on the 4th of August, 1763, at the age of thirty-four, deeply regretted, as the tombstones so often say, by all who knew him. His remains were interred in a monastery at Moscow, but all trace has been lost of his grave. There is, however, on the wall of one of the churches of the monastery, a brass tablet bearing his name. It is thought that his tomb must have been destroyed by the French in 1812.

According to the accounts given by his contemporaries, which have come down to our time, Theodore Volkoff had an attractive and sympathetic countenance which harmonised with all his high moral qualities. In features he is said to have closely resembled Peter the Great, and he certainly resembled him in his remarkable energy. Amongst other things he wrote fifteen plays, and many

verses; he sculptured with his own hands a bust of Peter the Great. In the National Library at Paris there are several of his translations from Molière. He seemed to be one of those capable of turning their hands to what ever they will with equal success. "He had," says one of his biographers, "the qualities that go to the making of a great statesman."

A hundred and fifty years after the founding of the first theatre in Russia, on the 10th of February, 1900, a Theatre Jubilee was held at Yaroslav in memory of Theodore Volkoff. Troops came from St. Petersburg and Moscow to take part in the pageant, and there was universal rejoicing. At the same time a subscription was opened for the erection of a Volkoff People's Palace, this being deemed the most suitable monument that his grateful admirers could raise in his honour. It had been Volkoff's dearest wish, according to his biographers, to raise and educate the masses.*

There are several important cotton mills in the neighbourhood of Yaroslav; one of the largest employs twenty-four thousand workmen. The linen of Yaroslav is renowned all over Russia; you can hardly walk through any town without seeing the announcement outside one shop or another, that Yaroslav linen is sold within. The largest tobacco manufactories are also at Yaroslav; they are four in number, and supply the whole length and breadth of Siberia with tobacco; it is the common snuff tobacco, and is all brought from Little Russia.

In the local museum we found a collection of ancient Finnish ornaments hung with little tongueless bells. The ladies who wore them must have had music wherever they went, for the bells jingled against one another at the slightest movement. These curious trophies have been excavated from tumuli between Yaroslav and Rostoff.

Under a glass case we saw one of the passports issued by

* I have as my chief authority a pamphlet which appeared in Yaroslav on the occasion of the Jubilee in 1900. It is for sale in the local museum. See also Harigold's "Geschichte des Theatres in Russland."

Napoleon when he held Moscow; and some specimens of paper manufactured in the twelfth century when that article was so dear that people used the bark of trees in place of it. There was also a case devoted to relics of the Volkoff family, amongst which I may mention a portrait of Volkoff in the character of King Lear, a picture of the house in which he was born at Kostroma, and several documents in his own handwriting.

Yaroslav claims to be the birthplace and home of seventeen millionaires, the richest of whom, M. P——, who goes by the name of "the iron king," is the son of a simple shepherd, and owes his present state of opulence entirely to his own capabilities.

Near Yaroslav there is a little village, where the peasants speak, not only their native tongue, but English, French, and German as well. Their linguistic talent is to be accounted for by the fact that their ancestors used to be hired out by their masters to labour in the dockyards of Kronstadt. Working alongside of foreign navvies and sailors they picked up their respective languages, and, returning home, taught them to their children. The men still go to Kronstadt to work, though now of their own free will, and the custom of teaching their children foreign languages is kept up as before. Professor Berens, the Director of the Lyceum of Jurisprudence, who is himself a linguist, told me some amusing stories of his talks with these accomplished peasants. Professor Berens was at one time the private secretary of Plehve, who, he told us, was a man who never forgot a kindness. Plehve and Bobrikoff seem to have had opposite views with regard to the politics of Finland, since Bobrikoff thwarted Plehve's plans more than once. Professor Berens is the author of an important work on Swedish town government, in two volumes.

I shall speak at length in a separate chapter about the industries of the Yaroslav government. The town is full of small tradesmen's shops, which have quite an Asiatic look with their long colonnades and whole sections of

streets devoted to the sale of one kind of goods—boots here, groceries there, and so on.

On their many holidays the people throng to the pleasant shady boulevard along the Volga's bank; it is here that the governor's house is situated. There is as yet no bridge across the Volga at Yaroslav, and it has to be crossed in little boats in summer; in winter it is so firmly frozen over that goods trains pass over the ice. Passengers from Moscow to Archangel have to cross the river in sleighs and take the train at a station on the opposite bank, for passenger trains are not allowed to cross.

It was on a beautiful autumn afternoon that we arrived at the little station of Kostroma, which stands by a forest of birch trees on the opposite bank of the Volga to that on which the town of Kostroma is situated. A wide avenue of fine birches runs inland from the river bank for thirty versts; it has a double row of these trees on either side, and is a sight which calls forth the admiration of every traveller. The bank of the river, which was rather high and steep opposite the town, was composed of rich brown soil, and enlivened with a few wooden houses scattered here and there. The sunset lights upon the water were very fine, and the houses, churches and monasteries of Kostroma sparkled on the opposite shore; the brilliance of the golden cupolas was dazzling. A short distance from the town, and close to the water's edge, stood the historical Ipatieff monastery, founded in the eleventh century by an ancestor of the Godonoff family, and rebuilt in the seventeenth. Here it was that Marfa, the wife of Philaret, lived with her son Michael for two years, and it was from this monastery that Michael was called to ascend the throne of Russia; for some years previously Marfa had lived in a convent for women on the other side of the town. In the Romanoff House at Moscow there is an old picture of the election of Michael; he is represented as quite a child, and, indeed, he was only sixteen years of age. Behind him is a crowd of nuns, and among them, and dressed as one, stands his mother. From this picture we

learn that the monastery was at that time built of wood. Another picture, representing the coronation of Michael in a church in the Moscow Kremlin, shows the houses of Moscow as also built of wood, and strongly resembling in shape the bathing boxes still in use at English watering-places; I remember that while I was looking at these pictures the old man who was showing us round brought a doll with a high pearl-covered cap, and, placing it in my hand, said, "There's his doll!" By relating this incident, however, I do not mean to infer that the first of the Romanoff czars played with dolls as late as the age of sixteen.

Our train had brought into Kostroma a crowd of reservists, and we watched them being driven down to the river, one, two, and three in a droshky, with their belongings, not in boxes, but tied up in bundles. A raft awaited them at the water's edge in front of the rude wharf, and a little passenger steamer towed it across as soon as the reservists had crowded on to it. They were most of them bricklayers and stone-masons, who had travelled all the way from St. Petersburg; it takes sixteen hours to make the journey from St. Petersburg to Yaroslav by express. Our return journey from Kostroma to Moscow by the fastest train available occupied eight hours. Kostroma, like Yaroslav, is celebrated for its linen, though that material is nearly always advertised in the shops as coming from Yaroslav.

The oldest church in Kostroma goes by the same name as quite half of the sacred edifices of Russia—that of Uspensky, or the Assumption. Founded in 1239, it was rebuilt in 1773; its chief peculiarity lies in the fact that the altar is turned to the north instead of to the east; this is because an ikon representing the Virgin Mary appeared to Basil, a prince of Kostroma, from the north, and assisted him when hard pressed by the Tatars; the ikon may still be seen in the church of the Ipatieff monastery. Another church, the *Voskresenia na Debrach*, was built in 1652 by a wealthy colour merchant of Kostroma as a thank-offering to God

for his preservation from shipwreck during a storm on his return journey from England; in those days the regular way to England was from Archangel by sea, and the voyage was often a very dangerous one. In the early part of the seventeenth century there were one thousand six hundred and thirty opulent citizens residing in Kostroma; in 1654 it was visited by plague, resulting in the death of some three thousand persons. The house of a former citizen is now the principal hotel; it goes by the name of Staroi Dvor, or "Old Court." The plot of Glinka's opera, *A Life for the Czar*, is founded on the true story of Ivan Sousanin, a peasant of Kostroma, who heroically sacrificed his own life for that of his sovereign; in 1613, when the Poles attempted to bribe him into betraying Michael into their hands, this loyal peasant purposely led them astray in the forest, and was put to death by them as soon as they discovered the trick he had played them. The opera referred to made Glinka's name; it marks an important point in the history of music in Russia, having created a reaction against the then dominant influence of Italian music, and being the first truly national music to be composed in the Czar's domains.

The Volga, along all the thousand miles of its winding course from the Valdai Hills to the Caspian Sea, has no prettier scenery on its banks than that which delights the eye of every traveller between Kostroma and Rêbinsk. It was here that Turguenieff, the novelist, returning from his travels in the south of Europe, was able to feel that at last he had ceased to regret Italy.

CHAPTER XVII.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES.

Human ant-hills—Artisans—Reputation enjoyed by the artisans of Yaroslav—"La petite industrie"—The purest Great Russians—Poushkin's theory—Dwellings of the industrial classes—Model cottages—No begging—Yaroslav millionaires—Carpenters — Furniture-making — Japanese spoons—Basket-making—Mat-making—Russian foot-gear—Cutlery—Sharp practice—Sickles—Samovars—Market-gardening—Chicory—Kaluga—Vegetables—Islands of the Volga—Cattle—Clay pottery—High boots—Spinning—Lace-making.

THERE are some spots in Russia which, if viewed from a balloon at a given distance, might well be mistaken for ant-hills. "What?" you exclaim, as you look down on the little dark objects hurrying about hither and thither, some carrying loads, others clustering in lively groups which quickly disperse and are formed again almost as quickly—"What? Can this be sleepy Russia?" Yes, these human ant-hills are in Russia, but only in one region; elsewhere you may look for them in vain.* Draw a straight line on your map from Moscow to Yaroslav, then draw a circle round it in such a way that the line forms the diameter of the circle. Within that circle, or fringing it, are the only localities in the whole of the Muscovite Empire in which the Russian may be compared to so energetic, so lively, so industrious a creature as the ant. "There is not an occupation, there is not a profession," says a Russian writer of the present day, "to which the shrewd, keen, reflecting and skilful Great Russian cannot

* "The industrial impulse was greatly strengthened by the institution of serfdom. The majority of the serfs in the government of Yaroslav have always been *obrok*, and not *corvée* peasants. This circumstance gave an extraordinary influence to manufacturing industry." Haxthausen, 1851.

adapt himself," and he goes on to say that, in the government of Yaroslav alone the artisans are engaged in more than a hundred and fifty different trades and handicrafts. Nowhere else in Russia are to be found such swarms of petty tradesmen, pedlars and hawkers, as in the Vladimir and Yaroslav governments.

But though the ant-hill remains stationary, the individual ants travel far and wide; you find pedlars from Yaroslav in every town. They say in St. Petersburg that you cannot cheat a man from Yaroslav; such a reputation does that government rejoice in for producing astute and cunning artisans. On the same subject another Russian, writing as far back as 1846, remarked—"*La petite industrie et le petit commerce—cette branche de l'industrie nationale—est très active, très féconde, et sous ce rapport les Russes surpassent même les Juifs, car, loin de se borner comme ceux-ci, à certains genres de brocantage, ils embrassent indistinctement toute espèce de petit négoce qui présente quelques chances de bénéfices. L'activité qu'ils déploient est merveilleuse, et ferait croire quelquefois qu'il s'agit de véritables spéculations commerciales.*"

Whence comes, then, all this concentrated commercial activity? To what race, or mixture of races, is it due? According to the opinion of a professor residing in the town of Yaroslav, who spends his spare hours in unravelling Russia's past, the Great Russians of that government are the purest of all the Great Russians—they are a mixture of Finnish and Slav blood, both of these being equally represented. Clearly, then, as far as the industrial as well as the peasant classes of Great Russia are concerned, it is a case of "Scratch the Russian, and you'll find a Finn." Napoleon had, perhaps, the aristocracy in his mind when he made that famous remark which I have dared to misquote.

It is a well-known fact that the purest Russian is that spoken in Great Russia. The story goes that when the upper classes, who had spoken French for generations in preference to their mother tongue, wished, in the early

part of the nineteenth century, to take up Russian once more, Poushkin advised them to learn it of the Moscow bakers. Since that time the Russian spoken by the Great Russians has gradually displaced other dialects, mainly through the unconscious agency of the industrial classes about whom we have been speaking. Carpenters, stone-masons, house-painters, plasterers, pedlars, have carried with them the speech of their childhood, and it has gradually taken the place of local variations, even in the remotest corners of the Empire. The origin of these variations, or dialects, has been attributed by some to the influence of the Finnish tongue, by others to the fact that the Slavs spread over Russia in three distinct streams, flowing in three separate currents.

As a rule the dwellings of the industrial classes are many degrees superior in comfort and cleanliness to those of the poorer agricultural class. A carpenter who has found employment for a year or two in one or other of the large towns has had many opportunities of using his eyes in other people's houses, and knows more ways of making home comfortable than the peasant or the fisherman has ever dreamed of, and if, as is often the case, he marries a girl who has been in domestic service, he has a wife who knows how to look after things. The isbas of such people are often beautifully clean, and would compare favourably with any of the model cottage homes in England; one has only to drive to the outskirts of the larger towns to find plenty of such houses. In many cases the wife adds considerably to the family resources by the sale of her handiwork—linen drawn and embroidered, much of which is done on large frames. A table-cover of this description will often take months to work, but it is as snowy in its appearance on the day of its completion as on the day it was begun. Only where there is the greatest cleanliness in the home is it possible to keep such work unsoiled, for it is taken up and laid down twenty times in the day.

The artisan's home is built of timber, just like that of the peasant, but it has more rooms and often two storeys.

The ubiquitous geranium is here too, peeping out between spotlessly white curtains, but, instead of a bench round the wall to sleep on, there is often a comfortable, civilised bed, with sheets, pillows and bedclothes. The walls of the living-room are often decorated with neatly framed photographs of friends and relatives. The front of the cottage has a great deal of carved woodwork, and is often painted some bright colour; the floors of the rooms are painted yellow. One thing pleased us greatly, both among the artisans and among the peasants, the absence of any wish on their part to extract money, or to get any other material advantage out of visitors such as ourselves, when they found that we took an interest in them; all that sort of thing they leave to the professional beggar, who has less pride. Say what you will, there is a nobility of soul about these people that excludes meanness, a nobility only too rare in other parts of the world. As for the class engaged in *le petit commerce*, their industry and astuteness is often rewarded by success, and they are able to amass snug little fortunes; there are more rouble millionaires of this calibre in the governments in question than in any other part of the Empire. To judge from the appearance of their chief town, it is evident that the people of the Yaroslav government have bestowed little of their locally gained money on either its streets or its public buildings, nor have they by their demands for the luxuries of life, done much to improve their shops.

Moscow might be called the largest of our ant-hills, and with good reason, if it were with Russian trade and traders as a whole that we were occupying ourselves; but we are thinking now only of *le petit commerce*, and that may be studied to greater advantage in such places as Yaroslav, Vladimir, and Rostoff, than in Moscow, where, driven from the centre of the town by a higher class of trade, *le petit commerce* is to be found only on the outskirts, and then only in what we may call a diluted form. In the towns within our circle everything that the lower classes can want is bought and sold in rough booths, or in the open air, but

there are certain trades peculiar to one district, and certain trades to another. The Yaroslav and Vladimir carpenters, joiners and turners, have a renown all over Russia; most of the household furniture "in the Russian style" comes from these governments, or from the government of Moscow, where eighty-seven villages are devoted to this trade, and nearly two-thousand five hundred pairs of hands are employed. A number of towns in the government of Tver are noted for their bamboo furniture. The government of Kostroma is famed for its wooden household utensils, its roughly-made toys, its wooden salt-boxes, bowls, spoons and cups. In one town in the government of Semenoff you may see any day in the bazaars more than half a million wooden spoons for sale; some are plain, and cost about a halfpenny each; others, rather more costly, are japanned—painted red, gold and black, and covered with varnish; these last find an enormous sale all over Russia, and travel in quantities to Central Asia, and even to Persia; they penetrate also to the west of Europe, where they are sold as "Japanese." In one part of the government of Moscow toys produced annually by the turner's lathe amount to the value of thirty-one thousand roubles—three thousand one hundred and twenty pounds sterling. In one small town in the government of Vladimir, and its outlying villages, six hundred men are employed in making wooden toys. A large village, in the government of Moscow, with its surrounding hamlets, is engaged exclusively in the plaiting of osier baskets, flower-stands and wicker furniture. The basket work of seven thousand odd carriages is supplied annually from another village in the neighbourhood of Vladimir; it is famed for its lightness, and is preferred in St. Petersburg to any other. In the forest country of Kostroma upwards of a hundred thousand puds of bast are annually utilised in the mat and sack making industry, in which fourteen thousand men and boys are engaged. In one locality in the government of Nijegorod, of which Nijni Novgorod is the chief town, the number of men employed

in mat-making has been estimated at two thousand two hundred, and in another locality of the same government, at one thousand. The peasants do most of this work to order, their customers being the small tradesmen of the various towns, who supply them with material. The *lapta*, a foot-gear of plaited lime-bast peculiar to the Russian peasant, are prepared chiefly in the government of Kostroma, to the value of a hundred thousand roubles, or ten thousand pounds sterling. A single worker can make upwards of four hundred pairs of these boots in one long Russian winter.*

Another industry, the manufacture of penknives, table-knives, forks and scissors, employs whole neighbourhoods in the government of Nijegorod; it is, indeed, their only means of earning a livelihood; here two country towns, with their hamlets, employ some four thousand workers. In the same government many thousands of villagers are engaged in the nail trade, iron and ready money for the expenses incurred being supplied by the buyers. Others, again, manufacture anchors, fish-hooks, metallic network and sieves. One neighbourhood has been famous for its locks for more than two hundred years. Our sharp-practising tradesmen of the ant-hills buy up these articles in great quantities, and sell them at the periodical fairs at such low prices that the purchaser gets them for very little more than the actual worth of the metal. Out of some three thousand ironworkers in a vicinity of the government of Tver, one thousand three hundred are nail-makers; but since the introduction of machine-made nails this industry has fallen off rapidly; some sixty years ago it had reached enormous proportions. The sickles made in the government of Vladimir make their way to every part of Russia, and find a good market in Roumania. Brass samovars, saucepans, springs, spurs and rings are manufactured by the inhabitants of twenty-three large villages in the government of Yaroslav, and it is from here that

* Most of the statistics given in this chapter are taken from those published by M. Semenoff, 1901.

the St. Petersburg shops, patronised by the cavalry, are supplied, so excellent is the quality of the work. In the neighbourhood of Rostoff some hundreds of men are engaged in the manufacture of carriage springs. In short, almost everything that the human hand can make is made by the people of Great Russia.

In the district round Rostoff the peasants have long since abandoned agriculture in favour of market-gardening, for which art they are renowned all over Russia, and also in Germany and Sweden. Peter the Great sent some of their ancestors to reside in Holland for a time, that they might improve their methods. The art appears to have been inherited most strongly in the female line, for, in some fifty-five villages, the gardening is carried on entirely by the women. Rostoff chicory, medicinal herbs and vegetables generally, enjoy a European renown, and the vegetable soup sold in tins in the shops of Moscow and St. Petersburg under the title of "*Soupe Julienne*" is made of Rostoff vegetables. In the early part of last century, a Russian* wrote with regard to this subject: "*Un certain district, celui de Rostoff, fournit des jardiniers ou maraîchers à presque tout l'empire; il en envoie même dans les provinces de la Baltique—ce ne fut pas sans un certain plaisir que j'entendis un jour un propriétaire de Manchester qui me vantait ses asperges me dire que la manière de les cultiver avait été empruntée à quelques maraîchers russes exercant cette industrie à Riga.*" All round the beautiful Rostoff lake lie these gardens, and little steamers carry the vegetables across the water. Not very long ago two gardeners were sent for by some vegetable growers at Erfurt, who had heard of their beans and peas and wished to learn their methods. A Russian acquaintance of mine met a Rostoff gardener while travelling in Sweden; he, also, had been induced to leave home on a like errand.

In the government of Kaluga, to the south of Moscow, the peasants not only use their own land for vegetable growing, but also lease extra land for the same purpose.

* N. Turguenieff.

In fact, nearly all the ploughed meadow-land is consequently in their hands, and in those of the neighbouring townspeople,—onions, turnips, cabbages, cucumbers, asparagus, all thrive here. The cabbage and the cucumber are the staple vegetables of Russia, and of the two, the cucumber is perhaps the more important, for no Russian, be he citizen or peasant, can do without his beloved *agurtzia*; the peasants eat pickled cucumber with their bread all the winter through, as we should eat butter or jam; but in summer cabbage often takes its place.

The Volga has many islands where it flows through the government of Kostroma, and these, covered every autumn by mud carried down by the current, are remarkable for the fruitfulness of their soil, and for their cabbages, lettuces, and turnips. On the shores of Lake Glaetch the peasants cultivate—after the autumn floods have subsided—lake gardens of an original character; when the sloping sides of the lake are under water in the autumn they drive stakes in where the garden is to be and strengthen them by others fastened across; when the level of the water has sunk to about an inch above the soil they cover the whole with turf, which, in its turn, is soon coated with a thick slime; in this they place flower-pots filled with ordinary manure, and finally they scatter freely over the whole surface a manure of rotten grass, which the waves of the lake, in their ebb and flow, have prepared for them on the banks. These lake gardens are entirely devoted to the cultivation of a kind of dwarf cucumber, which is highly prized for its excellent flavour.

In the industrial governments of which we have been speaking there is practically no cattle breeding; each family has, however, its own cow, kept for the sake of the milk, and as these cows are well fed their milk is rich; the Yaroslav cows are prized in St. Petersburg for this reason. There are very few sheep, and the horses are wretched.

Many villages, especially in the government of Moscow and Tver, are employed in making a coarse clay pottery,

much in demand among the peasants; in one locality six hundred pairs of hands are thus employed. In the same government there are numerous tanneries, and many thousands of the neighbouring villagers are employed in tanning calf-skin, dog-skin, Morocco leather and Russian leather; also in manufacturing saddles, harness and leather soles. In the government of Tver nearly twenty thousand men are employed in boot and shoe making; in the rich village of Kiemros six hundred and twenty-six families, representing fifty-five per cent. of the whole population, are occupied in making the high-top boots peculiar to the Russians; the boots from this village are considered the best that money can buy, and are to be found for sale in all the large towns of the Empire. The tall white Wellingtons worn by fishermen and excavators are manufactured in the government of Tver; townspeople as well as villagers are engaged in this work, the leather being supplied to them by the boot traders. They earn from sevenpence to one shilling a pair, and make about twelve roubles (twenty-five shillings) a month; these white top-boots are heavy and ugly, but splendid for keeping the feet dry.

A great deal of spinning and weaving used to be done by the peasants in their own homes, but huge factories rising in many parts of the country have quite superseded the old custom. Peasant women buy the material for their dresses now, in preference to making it, but lace-making still holds its place as an important industry, especially in the hamlets of the Moscow, Tver and Kostroma governments. In the government of Tver* upwards of fifteen hundred women are engaged in lace-making; some of these work to order, while others exchange their handiwork for household commodities. This close, minute work often proves detrimental to their health, and, however assiduously they may devote themselves to it, they can seldom make more than thirty-five roubles (three pounds ten shillings) in a year in the districts we are now speaking of.

* See chapters on Tver and Torjok.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NIJNI NOVGOROD, KAZAN, AND EKATERINBURG.

Early history—A legend—Menin and Pojarsky—Philaret—The Strogonoff family—Their origin—De Custine's account of the Fair—The Exhibition of 1896—The Kremlin—Situation—Kazan—The siege—University—Factories—A wealthy Tatar—Tatar ladies—Perm—Eternal snows—Ekaterinburg—A holy picture from Mount Athos—A convent—The Lady Superior—Candle-making—Painting ikons—Nuns as agriculturists.

NIJNI NOVGOROD is situated at the confluence of the Volga and the Oka. After Moscow, it is the most important town in the commercial district which now occupies our attention. As early as the twelfth century it had begun to play a part in the history of Russia, for we read that in 1178 the grand prince Andrew Bogolubsky stationed himself there with his troops when he was on an expedition against the Bolgars. In the summer of 1184 Nijni had already become a gathering point for Russian troops, who reached it, on the one side by way of the Volga and on the other by way of the Oka. The Russians have a legend to the effect that long, long ago there lived, in the wild forests of Nijni, on the banks of the Volga, a Mordvin, of the name of Skvoritz, who was the happy husband of eighteen wives and the proud father of seventy sons. One day a soothsayer predicted to Skvoritz that as long as his seventy sons could live together in peace, so long would the paternal forests remain their undisputed possession, but let them once begin to quarrel among themselves, and they would immediately be subjugated by the Russians. For some time the brothers managed to agree, but soon after their father's death disputes began to arise between them; at that very juncture Andrew Bogolubsky arrived upon the scene and chased them all away

In 1354 Andrew Alexandrovitch (the son of Alexander Nevsky) made his eldest son Prince of Nijegorod, the government of which Nijni Novgorod is the chief town. In 1366 Dmetri Donskoi, Grand Prince of Moscow, married Eudoxia, daughter of Dmetri Nijegorodsky, then the reigning prince of Nijegorod. After her husband's death Eudoxia took the veil and entered, under the name of Euphrosyne, the convent in the Kremlin at Moscow, which is generally known as the Maidens' Convent. She was laid to rest in the church within its precincts in 1407. In the same church thirty-eight princely personages were afterwards buried, the last of whom was Natalia, the sister of Peter II. In 1399 Nijni defended itself valiantly against the Tatar hordes, but was at length forced to surrender, whereupon the besiegers slaughtered the greater part of its inhabitants and devastated the surrounding country. After many vicissitudes Nijegorod was again devastated by the Tatars under Ulu Machmet in 1445. In the sixteenth century it came in for much of the fighting and bloodshed in connection with the struggle for Kazan. In 1508 Nijni Novgorod was strongly fortified under the directions of the famous Venetian architect Pietro Frasini, or Francesco. In 1524, after the founding of the Makarieff Fair, the importance of Nijni as a trading centre increased with great rapidity, and ever since that time it has been the great northern meeting point between the peoples of Europe and Asia.

Ivan the Terrible always passed through Nijni on his expeditions against Kazan. He was received by its citizens with a particular display of pomp and enthusiasm after the taking of Kazan, in 1552. At the commencement of the seventeenth century Nijni Novgorod was one of the most flourishing towns in Muscovy, and the second home of hundreds of boyar families who had been forced to leave Novgorod. Many times did Nijni Novgorod defend her country, not only against external but against internal enemies; but her crowning glory lies in the fact that the hero Menin, who, together with Pojarsky, delivered Russia

from the Poles, was one of her citizens. Menin died in 1616, in a house in the Nijni kremlin which had been given to him as a token of grateful recognition by Michael Feodorovitch. In 1654 nearly two thousand of the inhabitants of Nijni fell victims to a visitation of the plague.

In 1672 it was decided at Moscow that Nijni should have a metropolitan of its own, and accordingly one of her citizens, the Archimandrite Philaret, was elected. Peter the Great twice visited Nijni. On the first of these occasions, in 1698, while on his way to the sea of Azoff, he paid a visit to the grave of the hero Menin. His second visit was on the occasion of his expedition to Derbent, in 1722. On the evening before he set out for Astrakhan (by way of the Volga) he honoured Count Strogonoff by dining at his house. The origin of the Strogonoff family is interesting; they are descended from two brothers Strogonoff, Ivan and Gregory, who were among the earliest Russian colonists in Siberia; their father made his fortune by establishing some salt works at Vouchegda, and his reputation, by being the first merchant to open business connections beyond the Ural mountains; he was descended from an illustrious Mirza of the Golden Horde, and consequently of the Mongol race. This Tatar ancestor had been baptised into the Greek church under the name of Spiridon; he is notable as having introduced among the Russians the use of the *abacus*, or counting machine, seen in every Russian office of the present day. His own people, the Tatars, took him prisoner on the battle-field and tortured him to death. The name of Strogonoff is said to have been given to the son in memory of the kind of torture inflicted upon the father—*strogat* means to plane. Ivan the Terrible sent for the brothers Strogonoff when he wanted to conquer Siberia, and gave them permission to build fortresses and garrisons at their own expense; and to trade in salt and fish for twenty years without taxation, but if they discovered metal mines they were not to exploit them, but to indicate their whereabouts to Ivan. All

who take an interest in the history of Siberia are aware how closely the Strogonoff family has been connected with its fortunes, and every tourist to Russia has tasted a dish consisting of beef, chopped and stewed in sour cream, which bears the time-honoured name of Strogonoff.

Catherine II. visited Nijni in 1767, and founded here a "Merchants' Company" in order to encourage its commerce, which had begun to show signs of flagging. In 1812 Karamsin, the historian, resided at Nijni, and among his neighbours was the musician Glinka.

The Makarieff Fair was moved to Nijni from the neighbouring estate of Makarieff in 1816. De Custine, who visited it in 1839, wrote of it thus: "The fair of Nijni is held in an immense triangle of sandy and perfectly level land, which runs to a point between the Oka and its embouchure into the Volga and the broad stream of the latter river; it is, therefore, bordered on either side by one of the two rivers. The soil upon which so immense an amount of wealth is heaped scarcely rises above the water. This merchant city consists of a vast assemblage of long and broad streets; their perfect straightness lessens their otherwise picturesque effect. A dozen buildings, called Chinese pavilions, rise above the shops; but their fantastic style is not sufficient to correct the dulness and monotony of the general aspect of the edifices. The whole forms an oblong bazaar which appears solitary, so vast is it in extent. The dense crowds that obstruct the approaches disappear as soon as one penetrates the interior lines of stalls. The city of the fair is like all other Russian cities, too vast for its population, although the population, including its amphibious community scattered in boats on the river, and the 'flying camps' which environ the fair, amounts to 200,000 souls. The houses of the merchants stand upon a subterranean city, and immense vaulted sewers, in which labyrinth he would be lost who should attempt to penetrate without an experienced guide. Each street in the fair is doubled by a gallery, which follows the whole length, underground, and serves as an issue

for all refuse. The sewers are constructed of stone and cleaned several times daily by a multitude of pumps which introduce the water from the neighbouring rivers; they are entered by large and handsome stone staircases. These catacombs of filth, which are also for the prevention of everything offensive in the open streets, are placed under the charge of Cossacks, who form their police, and who politely invite the individual to descend. They are one of the most imposing works I have seen in Russia and might suggest models to the constructors of the sewers in Paris. So much vastness and solidity reminds me of the descriptions of Rome. They were built by the Emperor Alexander. He lavished millions in remedying the inconvenience of the injudicious choice he made when the fair of Makarieff was transported to Nijni."

I visited Nijni Novgorod at the time of the Exhibition in 1896. Ridiculously cheap trains were running from every corner of the Empire, but comparatively few Russians came to the Exhibition, and I afterwards heard that, from a financial point of view, it was a failure. The fair and the exhibition were held side by side, and everybody visited both. I walked through many parts of the fair, chatted with Bokharan merchants while they unrolled beautiful Persian carpets, and with Yakuts from the frozen Tundras of Siberia as they showed us their tempting furs. But the fair is not what it was in de Custine's time, either in size or importance. There are other easy meeting points between Europe and Asia in our day. Bokharans are learning to travel by rail from Tashkent to Orenburg; and thence, viâ Samara, to Moscow, and even to Paris; and the Yakut and the Chinaman can avail themselves of the Siberian express.

The kremlin of Nijni has still its charm for those interested in Russian history; it was built by Dmetri Konstantinovitch in 1510. The hotels of this town are among the very few in Russia that can safely be recommended to travellers from Western Europe; they were urgently needed and they arose towards the end of the

nineteenth century. Nijni had upwards of ten thousand inhabitants; in 1865 the number had risen to thirty-eight thousand; and in 1897, according to the census, it had reached to ninety-five thousand. Of the thirty churches, four only are of interest, the chief of which is the Cathedral of the Transfiguration, built originally in 1225, and three times restored. Several of the Nijegorod princes are buried in the crypt of this church, and tourists go there to admire the handsome monument raised in honour of Menin. In the lower part of the town there stands a church built by the Strogonoff family in 1719; it is called the Church of the Nativity.

As regards picturesqueness of situation Nijni Novgorod ranks next to Kieff, and its many beautiful gardens terminating in terraces on the banks of the Volga and Oka literally smother the town in verdure during the early summer.

According to the latest statistics available, the flour mills of Nijni grind flour to the value of 4,400,000 roubles and give employment to six hundred and forty workmen; its vineyards employ a hundred and fifty workmen, and its breweries ninety. Its factories and workshops in connection with iron and steel works turn out material to the value of 1,500,000 roubles and employ one thousand eight hundred workmen.

From Nijni we journeyed by river steamer to Kazan, the ancient capital of the Tatar kingdom, supposed to have been founded by Ulu Machmet, when he separated from his brothers in 1437. It is not known what were the exact boundaries of the kingdom of Kazan, but they seem to have included both banks of the Volga and to have extended southwards nearly to the Kirghiz steppe. The rulers were called *Beks*, or *Begs*, and the nobility *Mirzas*.

The present town of Kazan covers fourteen square versts and has two hundred and thirteen streets. It is situated on the left bank of the river Kazanka, and the streets nearest the river are often flooded in autumn. The name "Kazan" is derived from a Tatar word meaning "a kettle." Some say that the town received this name

because of its low situation, "like a kettle upon the hearth." Others affirm that the river gave its name to the town. Be that as it may, the original town, or "old Kazan," is forty-five versts distant from the town in question. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Russian town of Kazan was a purely military one; the walls destroyed by Ivan the Terrible had been rebuilt, at least in part; the original walls were of oak, and it was only in 1729 that these were entirely cleared away. I should weary the reader were I to enumerate half the fires that have partially consumed this town; two of the worst were those of 1579 and 1595. In the beginning of the eighteenth century Kazan had become the chief centre of trade for the whole of Eastern Russia. Its position on the Volga and its connection by the river Kama with Omsk and Tomsk made it a place of great importance, and Peter the Great meditated making it, at one time, a connecting link between Russia and China. It is well known that only a few years ago the Russian Government hesitated whether to build the great Siberian railway viâ Kazan, or viâ Samara and Cheliabinsk. In 1767 Catherine II. visited Kazan, and so high an opinion did she form of it that she mentioned it in a letter as "without doubt the first town in Russia after Moscow."

In 1804 the Kazan University was opened. Its faculty for Eastern languages has long been renowned all over Russia, and many are the well-known names that once enrolled themselves as students within those precincts. Among them is that of Count Leo Tolstoi.

There are some ninety-two factories in Kazan, producing work in connection with articles of food and drink to the value of ten million roubles, and employing five thousand nine hundred workmen. But the great interest of this town for foreigners is its Tatar buildings and its Tatar population. Tatar ladies, pretending to be veiled, filled the tramcar by which we travelled from one end of the town to the other. I say "pretended" because their bright black eyes and pretty noses were always perfectly visible; young Tatar

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

A Tartar woman, Kazan.

Artisan with brooms, Yaroslav.

Pedlar hawking chains, keys, and padlocks.

Pedlar hawking brushes.

[*To face page* 232.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

girls go about in the streets all day with as much freedom as is enjoyed by their Russian sisters. We were entertained in the home of one of the wealthiest Tatars in the town; he had made his fortune in the long leather boots which I have described in my chapter on Torjok, and which he supplies in quantities to all the principal bazaars of Central Asia; his wife did not appear to enjoy so much freedom as the other Tatar ladies; she was not permitted to join us at the repast. I had to visit her afterwards in her own apartment and found the poor creature gaily decked to receive me, but so fat, from want of exercise, that she could hardly walk. Her husband presented me with a book, written by himself in Arabic to illustrate a new way of overcoming the difficulties of pronouncing Arabic. Much depended, he assured me, upon the position of the tongue. From this gentleman we learned that a Tatar lady in Tiumen had recently started a newspaper for women.

From Kazan we travelled by the river Kama to Perm, where we spent a delightful and never-to-be-forgotten day with Russian friends. It was August, but the snow of the previous winter had not quite disappeared. While strolling on the hillside in brilliant sunshine I saw a woman come and help herself to a pailful of snow for her larder.

That evening the train carried us on to Ekaterinburg, in the Ural mountains, on the borders of Europe and Asia—Ekaterinburg, whose precious stones travel far and wide, rejoicing many a lady's heart, and whose iron works and mines of gold have attracted even Englishmen. The town is well lighted by electricity, and has had the benefit of electric tramcars since September, 1896. Dr. Lansdell, Dr. Baedeker, and Mr. Kennan,—in fact all the Siberian travellers of the nineteenth century—passed through Ekaterinburg. We visited at Tiumen, on the other side of the Urals, a Scotch lady, Mrs. Wardropper, who had resided there for nearly forty years, and had in her sitting-room a shelf filled with volumes of Siberian travel, sent her by authors whom her hospitality had cheered on their way.

We had been travelling all night, and when the train

at last steamed into the Ekaterinburg station we looked out eagerly for the face of a gentleman who had promised to meet us, but to our surprise the platform was a sea of upturned faces, all in eager expectation—of what? We could not think; we racked our brains.

"Royalty?" suggested a fellow-passenger.

"There can't be any Royalty in this train," said my brother, "or we should have found it out before."

At this point I began to examine the crowd and found that most of the faces belonged to respectably dressed peasant women, but scattered amongst them were many nuns in sombre robes, long-haired priests, and beggars with collecting-boxes, and here and there a gaily-dressed lady. What could it all mean? Now our friend appeared, making his way towards us through the crowd, and after greetings had been exchanged, we got him to give us an explanation of the phenomenon. An ikon, representing the Virgin Mary, was the cause of all that excitement; it had come from Mount Athos, and while making a tour through Russia, had chosen Ekaterinburg as one of its halting-places. The inhabitants of the town were convinced that much blessing had come to them during its stay, and now that it was leaving them they had come to the station to witness its departure; those who had not found room on the platform had posted themselves on the hillock above the station ice-house. Just before our train arrived a religious service had taken place during which the picture had been placed on a seat in a second-class carriage while the people crossed themselves and bowed their heads; they were now waiting for the carriage to be joined on to our train, and to pass through the station for the last time. Nuns and beggars rattled their collecting-boxes in all directions, collecting busily till the carriage came up, when everyone made a rush to get a glimpse of one corner of the picture, which was all that could be seen of it through the window. Then, as it passed, they crossed themselves, and handed the collecting-boxes to the priests who stood in the carriage. The picture, we found, had undertaken this tour with a

double purpose—namely, that of distributing blessings and collecting the needful.

The large number of nuns and the peculiarity of their head-dress had attracted our attention, and hearing that there was a convent not far off, we went to see something of their home life, accompanied by a gentleman who was a personal friend of the Lady Superior. The convent is a collection of large white buildings with green roofs, surrounded by a high wall, with plenty of open space inside. Entering one of them we mounted a broad staircase, and were shown into a handsome reception-room, where we sat in state till the Lady Superior made her appearance. The convent contains six hundred nuns, one hundred novices and fifty orphan girls who are being trained for nuns. We knew all this, and were aware that the post of Lady Superior is not in any case a sinecure. What, then, was our surprise, when, instead of the wrinkled or at least careworn face of an elderly woman, we found before us that of a young and almost girlishly pretty one, who, though she must in reality have been a good deal older, had all the youthful freshness of twenty-five. Besides this, there was an air of graceful and dignified tranquillity about her every movement, while a serene look, such as one seldom meets with in the outside world, shone in her beautiful eyes, and charmed us before she spoke. We had risen to meet her as she entered, but with a queenly bend of her head she motioned us to be seated, and placing herself on the sofa, sat with folded hands while the reason of our visit was explained to her. Then she rose and led us into another reception-room, which was more stiffly furnished even than the first; here also she asked us to sit down, and after a moment's pause made me (the only lady of the party) leave the chair I had taken and sit by her side on the sofa. When all the necessary formality had been gone through she left the room a moment and returned with some pieces of velvet, embroidered with gold leaves and flowers—her own work—and behind her came a nun carrying more fine needlework for us to look at.

The admiration we bestowed upon it was unfeigned; we had never seen more beautiful work. A pleasant-looking nun now took us on a tour of inspection; she was the treasurer of the convent, and took great pride in showing us the different buildings, and all the nuns and novices engaged in their different occupations. First we saw the studio, where the holy nuns were painting the pictures which take the place of images in the Greek church. Many were of St. Nicholas, for he is the favourite saint, and many, of course, were of the Virgin and Child, or the Head of Christ. The nuns lay on a background of gold-leaf, and work it very neatly. The next building we visited was devoted to candle-making, and as we passed from room to room we saw the wicks dipped in wax, cut, and finished off; those intended for use at weddings and other special occasions were being decorated with silver-gilt leaf. We also saw the wax in its different stages of preparation. There were great trays, many yards in length, filled with flakes of wax, which are laid out of doors from two to three months at a time to be bleached. The flakes are formed by pouring the wax into cold water, and at a little distance these looked like freshly-fallen snow. Now we were taken to see the bread-making department, where the nuns handed us some beautifully baked loaves—the daintiest little things we ever saw—and, as we were putting them into our pockets, they explained to us that they were especially made for the Sacrament at the churches in the neighbourhood. The black bread made for the convent was not bad either, though a little sour to English taste. Many other departments were shown to us, and our astonishment grew as more and more of the work carried on by these enterprising nuns was revealed. They also go in for agriculture and even horse-breeding, and have the entire management of the land belonging to the convent. When we were leaving the Lady Superior stepped up to me and placed in my hand a souvenir of my visit to the convent. It was a photograph of herself.

CHAPTER XIX.

TULA.

Importance of Tula industries—Gingerbread—Samovars—A great mechanic—Fruit trees—A government town—Church of the Assumption—Reasons for our short stay—A visit to Count Leo Tolstoi—Ringing the bell—Autumn leaves—Spinoza—American ministers—Emerson—The days of telephones—The best of life—Buddha—Tolstoi and Spencer—America's best men—Utter rubbish—Glad to go—Legend of the Great Bear—The Babi sect—Topic of the war is avoided—Tolstoi's German origin—In the siege of Sebastopol—Truth for truth's sake—Influence of Auerbach—The Countess Tolstoi—One of the world's masterpieces—Copyright—Why English translations are so poor—Tolstoi's village—Interiors—Pretty country—Madame Bentzon's visit to Tolstoi—Charles Dickens—George Eliot—A Frenchman's opinion.

EVERY admirer of Count Leo Tolstoi has heard of Tula, but few people outside Russia are aware that it is anything more than a village, at the station of which it is necessary to alight when visiting the most renowned of Russia's living literary men.* Yet Tula is, in reality, a town of some importance, whose manufactories supply large quantities of goods to every part of Russia, to Central Asia, and Siberia. Founded early in the twelfth century, Tula took her name from the little river upon whose banks she stood. The Russian word *tulĕt*, to step inside, or to hide, seems to have been the root from which the stream in its turn received its name, in consequence of its many windings in the neighbouring forests. About the year 1530, the town, entirely of wood until that date, was rebuilt in stone. The population of Tula, reckoned in 1841 at fifty-eight thousand, has to-day reached more than twice that figure.

* Visitors to Tolstoi usually alight at a small station some versts nearer his estate than Tula.

Of the manufactured articles which have shed renown upon the name of Tula, the two that I should mention first are Tula gingerbread and Tula samovars; both find their way into Asia, chiefly by way of the Nijni Novgorod fair. I remember being much struck, during my rambles in Central Asia, with the ubiquity of the Russian samovar; there was one in every Kirghiz *yurt*, as well as in every Turkoman *kibitka*. The Government has a large weapon foundry at Tula, and mentioning this reminds me that the first of the great Demidoff family was a Tula blacksmith, who pleased Peter the Great by his quick and skilful carrying out of an order that Peter gave him while making a halt at Tula on one of his journeys. Imperial favours having been showered upon him, this fortunate mechanic soon became an extremely wealthy man. Tissot gives an amusing account of the way in which Demidoff's son and grandson spent their wealth; one of them, amongst other extravagances, had gold spectacles made for his carriage horses.* With regard to later generations of the family, most of us have seen the Demidoff villa at Nice, and the beautiful Demidoff fountains at Florence. I have described elsewhere the Demidoff academy of jurisprudence at Yaroslav.

A great deal of fruit is cultivated in the neighbourhood of Tula; in the gardens of the town itself there are more than a hundred thousand fruit trees, and a garden just outside contains one thousand apple trees. For a hundred years past several of the adjoining governments have been supplied with apples from the gardens of Tula. A great trade is also done in apple nurslings, which are cultivated from the seed on purpose for the market; these bring to the town some forty-three thousand roubles a year.

Tula was raised to the rank of a government town in

* Dr. Clarke, who passed through Tula in 1809, was besieged in the streets by people selling scissors, needles, spectacles, and such commodities. He states that Catherine II. got artisans from England to teach the people of Tula how to make spectacles, and bought them up herself when they could not sell all they made. Perhaps the Demidoff in question was also anxious to encourage the spectacle trade.

the year 1777, and most of her churches were built about that time. The cathedral church of the Assumption was begun in 1742 and completed in 1744; it has many interesting frescoes by Yaroslav artists, which are good examples of that period of Russian art, both as regards technic and style; on the western wall there is a complete series of illustrations of the Song of Solomon.

We had taken berths in the night express from Moscow to Kursk, and given up all thought of visiting Tula, because of the lateness of the year, it was already October, and we were hastening to the Crimea, that we might see it at its best—no one who has read Kinglake would choose to visit the Russian Riviera in November. However, we decided somewhat suddenly to make a halt at Tula after all, and pay a surprise visit to Count Tolstoi. We had barely made the resolve when the train drew up at the station, and we had to alight. It was two o'clock in the morning, a gruesome hour, and the way to an unknown hotel was long and cold. We crossed the path of a night watchman, with his wooden rattle, which he held up and rattled close to my ear. How grateful thieves must be to the watchmen for thus letting them know when they are at hand!*

The next morning we ordered a well-conditioned vehicle with two horses, and made a bargain with the coachman to drive us to Yasnaya Polyana and back, for the sum of eight roubles. It was a drive of seventeen versts to Tolstoi's home, and we had a cold wind in our faces all the way. Once outside the town the road was fairly good. We passed through a tollgate, after paying two kopecks each, and left several large factories behind us, but saw no dwelling-house of any kind till we reached the round brick gateposts which marked the entrance to the long, winding birch drive leading to Tolstoi's house. Two

* It is not so very long since London, too, had her night watchmen. Smollett, writing in 1767, makes one of his characters say, "I start every hour from my sleep (in London) at the horrid noise of the watchmen bawling the hour through every street and thundering at every door—a set of useless fellows, who serve no other purpose but that of disturbing the repose of the inhabitants."

ladies were playing tennis on one side of the drive, and on the other we saw the golden birch leaves reflected in a pretty piece of water, to the mossy bank of which a tiny boat was moored. A verandah covered with half-withered foliage hid part of the low-built house from our view as we descended from our carriage and looked round for a bell in the vicinity of the principal entrance. A peasant woman was standing by the door, which was partly open, and as she appeared to feel quite at home, I asked if she could show me the bell.

"I, too, am a stranger here," she replied, with dignity; "but I suppose that's the bell," and she pulled a rope which hung from the branch of a neighbouring tree, and set in motion the tongue of a great iron bell which I now noticed for the first time, half hidden in the leaves. The woman was a beggar; she had tramped out from Tula to see what she could get from the great philanthropist. The leaves from the creepers on the trellis-work of the verandah, and the leaves from the surrounding birch trees, were falling, and they must have been doing so for days, for there were heaps of leaves under every tree, on the flower-beds, and on the paths, which no gardener's broom had made any attempt to clear. The whole scene was a picture of autumn left to work her own sweet will; the very house appeared to be in the autumn of its life, and there was an autumn chill in the October air.

A small child now came to the door at the sound of the bell the beggar had pulled; she invited us to enter the house, and showed us into a room the furniture of which consisted chiefly of paper-covered books in bookcases round the walls. Here we waited till the great man appeared. The first title to catch my eye among the books was that of Spinoza. Several shelves on one side of the room were filled with bundles of manuscript writing, and in one corner there was a camp-bed. A couple of busts were the only ornaments in the room.

Count Tolstoi came to us a minute later and shook hands with much geniality; we were soon deep in conversation

on all manner of topics. There was a kindly expression on the face of the venerable novelist which made his noble features more attractive than any photograph has been able to represent them.

"*Il y a une vertu dans les regards d'un grand homme.*"*

"The last foreigners to call on me," he said, "were two American ministers. I was surprised to find, in the course of my conversation with them, how ignorant they were of the greatest writers of their country. They had never read Emerson, and, in fact, knew very little about him; they had never heard of Canning, Parker, or Thoreau—men well worth reading, in my opinion. These are the days of telephones and superficiality. People miss the best of life. What is more precious than to know and study the works of the truly great? Your England has never appreciated Ruskin or Carlyle as she should have done, and France has undervalued Voltaire. Everyone of us ought to give a little time, in the early part of the day, when the intellect is at its freshest, to the study of the thoughts that great men have left behind them. If we neglect to do this we simply miss the best that life has to offer us."

"Many people begin the day by reading the Bible," my mother remarked.

"Ah, but we must read other books as well; Buddha, if you will, or Socrates."

"What do you think of Herbert Spencer?" I asked, for we had just been reading his autobiography.

"Spencer had no heart; I don't like him.† His writings are so full of truisms; you always know what he is going to say next. I can't get on with him."

Then he returned to the subject of the American writers. "America's best men," he said, "were all at their zenith about the time of the civil war. The American magazines of to-day cause a terrible waste of time by tempting people to read them. With their splendid paper and superb illustrations, what utter rubbish they are to read! As for

* Chateaubriand.

† Had Count Tolstoi read the autobiography he could hardly have spoken thus.

the newspapers, I have not looked at one for two months, and I am very glad I have not wasted my time over them. My daughter looks them through for me, and tells me anything worth hearing. As regards the American magazines, I consider that they are becoming a curse to the nation by tempting young people to waste their time over profitless reading."

To our question as to whether he was writing any more novels, he replied that he was now engaged upon one, but it would not be published till after his death, and, he added pathetically, "I shall be glad to go. It will be better there, and I shall go soon."

"You must not talk like that," I said.

"Why not?" he replied quite sharply.

"Because there are people here who need you."

He looked interested, and his thoughts involuntarily turned to his unmarried daughter, for he said, "My daughter is playing tennis. Do you play?"

I replied that I was not very good at it, and he then talked about the little school his daughter had started in their village, and which had been stopped by the Government.

"I have been trying to read some Hebrew of late," he went on, "but I find I forget the languages I learned in middle age and remember those I learned in my youth. I was about fifty when I learned Hebrew; I am now seventy-six. Greek, which I learned when a boy, I can read now without any difficulty."

Then he changed the subject, and told us he had just been reading a pretty legend, English or American, he did not know which, about the Great Bear. He proceeded to narrate the story from beginning to end. It was about a little girl whose mother sent her to the brook to fetch water in a wooden bowl with a long handle, and who was tempted by her kind heart to give the water away to someone in need of it, and to refill her bowl several times. Each time she filled the bowl for the sake of another the good fairies changed it into a more valuable one; it became

golden, and finally it became a sparkling diamond bowl, which, being too good for ordinary use, was placed in the sky, where it is still to be seen on a starry night. I have only given the bare outline, but Count Tolstoi told us every detail, speaking in beautiful English, and with a far-off look in his kind grey eyes, as though he could see all that he was describing.

"I have been turning my attention of late," said the Count, "to the tenets of the Bab's followers, and to those of a somewhat similar sect in Algeria. It was a disappointment to find them adhering so closely as they do to the Khoran; there is absolutely nothing new in their belief."

He was interested in all I could tell him of the Bab colony at Askhabad, and talked of the Bab's American followers at Chicago, remarking that he did not think it likely that their number would increase.

Not one word passed between us on the subject of the Russo-Japanese war. But Tolstoi was careful to impress upon us his absolute indifference to, and contempt for, all recent events of national interest, though they must have been uppermost in his thoughts as they were in ours, his own son having joined the army in Manchuria only a few weeks before, in direct opposition to his father's views.

Count Tolstoi's family was originally German, the name *Dick* having been changed to the Russian equivalent for fat, or stout, namely, *tolstoi*. The Tolstoi family has been a prominent one in Russia since the time of Peter the Great. Leo Tolstoi was born in 1828; his mother died while he was a baby, and his father only lived till the boy was nine years old. An aunt took charge of him and brought him up. He was educated at the Kazan University, where his chief study was that of Oriental languages. On leaving the university he lived a very gay life in St. Petersburg for about four years, after which he entered the 4th Battery of the 20th Artillery Brigade, then at Terek. At the commencement of the Crimean war he had the command of a battery under Gorchakoff, and remained at Sebastopol during the whole of the eleven months' siege. His inde-

pendent personality had by this time become more and more pronounced, as also had the sharpness of his powers of observation. He was always distinguished for his love of truth for truth's sake. Tolstoi made his first foreign tour in the year 1857. Germany interested him greatly, but Paris was the town that attracted him most. His friend Turguenieff was living there at that time, and took him to all the places of interest. He also visited Italy and Switzerland. All through his travels he was collecting impressions that became invaluable to him later on. In 1860 he began to study seriously the writings of Berthold Auerbach. Auerbach had recently published his "Village Tales," and these had a great fascination for Tolstoi, who already felt his sympathies drawn out towards the unhappy peasants of his country, still under the bondage of serfdom. It was in 1860 that he visited London and went to hear a debate in Parliament. Tolstoi married the daughter of a German doctor in Moscow, and had a family of nine children. With regard to his writings, it is a regrettable fact that his weakest work has been the most read, and has earned him the widest fame. Among his novels, "War and Peace" is unquestionably the greatest. It is classed to-day among the world's masterpieces by those who are the most competent to judge. Tolstoi's works, like those of Turguenieff, have suffered much through the absence of copyright between Russia and Germany. Badly translated into German by unauthorised individuals, they have been again translated from the German into English and French, and the results have been disastrous. Only those translations that have been made direct from the original Russian by translators well acquainted with the Russian language can give anything like a true idea of Turguenieff or Tolstoi.

The simple grey tunic and belt of a Russian peasant is not an unbecoming dress when clean and tidy, and Tolstoi's fine figure looked decidedly well in it. For such a house and surroundings, I do not think he could have chosen a more suitable style. It must be charming to live in so

retired a nest when you are so great that every visitor to Russia of any importance makes a pilgrimage to see and talk with you. Tolstoi has both intellectual intercourse and quiet leisure; he does not like visitors to come without writing first to arrange the day; surprise visits like ours are very exceptional. There was of course a special interest for us in coming upon the great man unawares, dropping in unexpectedly upon his daily routine in so informal a way; we were glad afterwards that ours had not been a pre-arranged visit, though nothing short of necessity would have induced us to risk anything so unpremeditated.

His daughter, whom we had seen at her game of tennis, is now the only unmarried one. She is a pleasant, healthy-looking young lady, with a complexion worthy of a Briton, and, indeed, she might well pass for an English girl. She takes, like her father, a deep interest in the peasants, and it was owing to her suggestion that we paid a visit to their village before returning to Tula. Yasnaya Polyana is a one-street village, with five or six hundred inhabitants, situated close to the entrance of the Tolstoi estate. We visited several homes, going straight to the door of any isba that happened to attract us. Some of them were built of red brick, with straw-thatched roofs; others, of wood, had painted green roofs, and a dapper, villa-like appearance; others again were dilapidated, and looked like tumble-down hayricks; several had whitewashed walls. In the first that we entered there was a neat old woman, who looked greatly perplexed at receiving so unexpected a visit; but when I mentioned Count Tolstoi, her face beamed with pleasure.

"Have you been to see our Count?" she said eagerly.

"Yes; we have just left him," I replied.

"He is good. Our Count is good, very good," she said earnestly, and a number of men and women who had gathered round gave their hearty assent; it was clearly a pleasure to them to sing the praises of their dear Count.

The interiors of the cottages were usually whitewashed;

each one had a shelf covered with ikons, and the walls were adorned with coloured prints, foremost among which were portraits of the Emperor and Empress. The peasants of Tolstoi's village are neither socialists nor agnostics. All the isbas were clean and tidy in comparison with the usual state of Russian interiors, and the air we breathed in them was good; but there was nothing to make you feel you were in a model village, and the people were evidently very poor. The country round was covered with the yellow stubble of recently harvested corn, varied here and there by broad cabbage fields, a verdant green in colour; quantities of cabbages are grown in that locality. The ground in the neighbourhood of the Tolstoi estate is slightly undulating, a positive relief after the flat country we had been travelling over so long.

About a year before our visit a talented French lady, Madame Bentzon, visited Count Tolstoi while he was in the Crimea recovering from a severe illness, and it is to her lively pages that I would refer my readers for an account of his literary likes and dislikes. We learn from her that he is a great admirer of Rousseau; that he does not sufficiently appreciate Daudet, and that he has a contempt for the writings of Zola. To him the greatest writer of fiction was Charles Dickens, and the altruism of George Eliot touched a responding chord in his heart. "*Toutes ses colères sont dirigées contre Kipling*," says Madame Bentzon, "*non seulement il déteste l'impérialisme belliqueux de l'écrivain anglais, mais il lui refuse tout talent, ce qui est aller bien loin.*" De Vogüé, a French writer, who has made a serious study of Russian fiction, is full of praises for our George Eliot, and says that he prefers her novels to those of Tolstoi or Turguenieff. In his opinion these two great Russian writers "*disputent maintenant aux Anglais la primauté dans le roman réaliste.*" I have quoted his words because there is a special interest attached to a comparison between English and Russian novelists when it is made by a critic whose nationality is French.*

* See "Le Roman Russe," by Vicomte de Vogüé.

CHAPTER XX.

KURSK.

A provincial town—The Black-Earth district—Origin of Kursk—Theodosius; his flight to Kieff—Situation of Kursk—Wealthy tradesmen—Jews—First-class travellers—A triumphal arch—The good angel of Kursk—A model hospital—A serious drawback—Too much clean linen—Wounded soldiers—Opinions about Nicholas II.—Villages round Kursk compared to Kaffir settlements—Peasant life in the Black-Earth district—Village streets—Willow trees—Tall grass used as fuel—Fresh hay—Building with bricks—Large villages—Apples—Not enough cattle—Bees—Forest honey—The intellectual proletariat—Technical schools wanted—Village priests—Literary celebrities—Tamboff horse-breeding—Half the horses in the world.

A SOUTHWARD journey of eight hours by express brought us from Tula to Kursk, through miles, and miles, and miles, of level corn land,* with hardly a tree in sight. Both of these towns are situated in the Black-Earth region, and the railway line which joins them cuts through the belt of rich black soil that runs half round the globe, unbroken except where the Urals cross it and mark the boundary of Siberia. Kursk is the oldest town in Central Russia, and her history is closely connected with that of Kieff. Founded at the commencement of the eleventh century, in the reign of Vladimir, Kursk was the birthplace of one of the most revered of all the Russian saints—Theodosius. We are told that from his tenderest years the boy Theodosius was remarkable for his extreme piety, wore rags

* Speaking of this region, Rambaud says: "Elle nourrit à elle seule 25 millions d'habitants, et sa population augmente chaque jour. De tout temps, elle a été le grenier de l'Europe orientale, c'est là qu'Hérodote plaçait les Scythes laboureuses, et c'est de là qu'Athènes tirait ses provisions de céréales." He calls it "un champ de blé grand comme la France entière."

that he might give his tidy clothes to the poor, and mortified his flesh by wearing heavy chains. His mother, who seems to have been a practical sort of woman, was furious with her son for thus maltreating himself, and tried to beat his piety out of him, but without success. When quite a youth, having decided to consecrate his life to the service of God and the Church, he left home and entered a monastery at Kieff. It was at Kieff that he spent the rest of his days, but Kursk considers him to be her patron saint, and most of her churches bear his name, as well as the town fountain, built over a spring at which he quenched his thirst as a child.

Kursk is now a town of some fifty-four thousand inhabitants, prettily situated on the high bank of the river Tuskora. As the station is on low flat ground at the foot of the bank there is a steep drive to take before you reach the town. Kursk is essentially a provincial town. Here there are a number of wealthy tradesmen—Russians, Poles and Jews, besides a large community of poor Jews who get a great deal of assistance from their more prosperous brethren. The Jews of Kursk are in close business connection with those of Kieff, and are, like them, for the most part, of Polish nationality. Every Saturday the trains between the two towns are packed with Jewish travellers, whose degree of cleanliness and general appearance are such as one would expect to meet with in the fourth class, but not in the first, where, however, they travel very comfortably, owing to an understanding with the guard: the ladies of Kursk, who pay for first-class tickets, find their company anything but agreeable. Yet, whatever Russia may say or think about her Jews, and however she may treat them, it is they who bring prosperity to her towns. I had not travelled long in Russia before I was able, with one drive through the principal street of a town, to tell at a glance whether it had a large community of Jewish merchants, or a small one.

The first thing that struck us on our arrival at Kursk was a triumphal arch bearing the date 1823, erected

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

A view of Tula.

A nunnery, Kursk.

[*To face page* 248.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

in honour of Alexander I. when he visited Kursk on his way to the Crimea. The second thing that struck us was the high price asked for stale eggs, and the impossibility of obtaining fresh ones. On enquiring into the cause of this state of things, we discovered that Kursk does a large trade in eggs, exporting them in great quantities, not only to other parts of Russia, but also to foreign countries. Every good egg is exported. The test of laying them in water is gone through with every one, and only the stale ones are retained for sale in the town. Much hemp is also exported, but the most important produce of the Black-Earth region is of course its corn; this is exported in enormous quantities, viâ Riga and Libau; much of it, as we know, reaches London. Fruit growing is the occupation of a large part of the population of the Kursk government, but no fruit is exported to foreign countries; it is grown for the Moscow markets. Though almost in the same latitude as Vienna, Kursk has a continental climate, with a cold in winter often 20° Réaumur. There are a number of estates in the government belonging to wealthy noblemen, but almost all of them are heavily mortgaged. Kursk has a civil governor and a military one, the latter under the administration of Kieff. The country round Kursk is well wooded, and the woods are famed for their nightingales. The electric tramways of Kursk are among the best regulated in Europe, and the tramcars are so well lighted and so comfortable that it is a pleasure to ride in them; I should blush with shame were I to compare them with those of London.

The most interesting personality in the town of Kursk is a charming old lady, eighty years of age, who has made a name for herself by her charity and good works. She built, in 1895, and presented to the country, a model Red Cross hospital, which was re-opened, after enlargement, by the Emperor Nicholas II. in 1903. It has eighteen nursing sisters, and a pretty chapel, forming an extension to the dining-room, from which it is separated by folding doors. On great occasions the doors are thrown open,

and the dining-room becomes part of the chapel. The altar is of coloured marble, and there are some good church paintings. All the interior walls of the hospital are white; the ceilings, the beds, and the furniture are also white. Brown linoleum covers the floors, and is the only coloured object that meets the eye. Electric light is fitted to every room. The nurses are women of a superior class, with pleasant bright faces; their costume consists of a spotless white handkerchief tied over the head, and a large grey cotton apron with a red cross on the bib. On the wall of the dining-room we saw a large photograph of the re-opening ceremony. The Emperor is standing upon the steps leading to the pretty garden which surrounds the hospital, and by his side stands the old lady, in gala dress, hale and hearty, and beaming with satisfaction. A Russian by birth, she married an officer of French extraction; her full name is Madame la Générale de Montrèsor; the chief hotel in Kursk belongs to her, and bears her name. The hospital is fitted up with the latest improvements; there are electric baths, operating-rooms, private rooms for paying patients, and verandahs covered with creepers, where convalescent patients can take their meals in hot weather. Steam heating gives an equable temperature to every room; Russians understand the art of heating far better than we do. But this excellent hospital has one serious drawback in the eyes of the class for whose benefit it was built—it is too clean. A lady, who took some trouble to get her sick coachman a bed there, told me that he refused to stay till he had recovered his health, saying, in excuse of his apparent ingratitude, that he really could not stand the cleanliness and the constant change of linen imposed upon him by the nurses. Madame la Générale de Montrèsor has a daughter, the Baroness de Traubenberg, who also takes a deep interest in the welfare of the people of Kursk. She assists her aged mother more and more in her good works, and will probably take her place in years to come. I was sitting with the daughter one evening, when the door opened, soon

after nine o'clock, and in came the charming old lady,—full of enthusiasm about the temporary convalescent home that was to be prepared for soldiers returning from the seat of war. She had been at a meeting of the committee, of which she was one of the most active members, and told us, with a beaming face, that the bishop had written them a letter offering his private residence for the purpose; it had a chapel, baths, and a shady garden, and was in every way the most suitable building in the town. These ladies spoke with warmth of the kindness and goodness of the present Emperor.

"All Russians," they said, "who have come into personal contact with Nicholas II. like and love him. This is the case, even with those who have the most democratic views as to how a country should be governed."

"Do you know the difference between England and Russia?" the daughter asked me smiling, and then, as I hesitated, she added, "It is this—Russia has more land than men, and England has more men than land."

The villages round Kursk, and throughout the Black-Earth region, have quite a different appearance from those to the north of Moscow. The roofs here are rudely thatched with straw, and the eaves overhang the low walls to such an extent that they are often quite hidden from view, and you might easily mistake a village at a little distance for a collection of tottering hay-ricks. The wife of the German pastor of Kursk used to say that it would be impossible, from the train windows, to distinguish a Central Russian village from a Kaffir settlement in South Africa. The houses are sometimes built on two sides of a long narrow street, which merges at the respective ends of the village into a country road, often a verst in length, with occasional intermissions, and sometimes there is a church; in which case there are several streets converging to the church in the centre. Each moujik keeps a dog to guard his house and property, and take the place of the hedge one sees in other parts. Very few of the houses have chimneys. The walls are built of various

kinds of wood, often of oak, that tree being very plentiful in the south of this region. The floor of the isba is of earth, which is just as well, seeing that in winter the calves and young pigs are brought in with the children, that they may share the warmth of the stove. Each family has, on the opposite side of the street, a barn where they can store flour, vegetables and other commodities. These barns are built sometimes of brick, and even stone, but oftener of wood, and their roofs are always of straw. The reader can imagine how quickly such a village would burn to the ground when the straw on the roofs is dry. To prevent such catastrophes the peasants plant willow trees in their yards, and between the houses, and they certainly impede the spread of the flames from roof to roof.* Many of the peasants here, as in the north, dislike the idea of an isba with a chimney; they say it is so much warmer without one, but the smoky atmosphere does great injury to their eyes, which often results in blindness. They feed their stoves in this part with straw, instead of wood, as it is so much more plentiful, but in bad years it is a case of "no corn, no straw," and then they and their cattle suffer terribly from cold as well as hunger. They often dry the tall grass that grows on the Black-Earth steppe, and use that for fuel. I read somewhere that it was the custom of these peasants to get in fresh hay every evening in place of mattresses to sleep on, and to use it as fuel the next day; but the people of Kursk did not corroborate this when I questioned them. "I only wish it were true," said one lady, shaking her head sadly.

The peasants are beginning now to build their isbas of bricks made from the local clay, which is a decided improvement. There are no baths in these villages, but every member of the family gets a steaming once a week in the household oven, finishing up with a roll in the snow in winter; this makes them very hardy, and they never catch cold. Some of the villages have upwards of two thousand inhabitants, the average number being about

* The police often insist upon their planting these trees.

a thousand. The overhanging eaves form a sheltered place where the women and children can sit in hot weather. The peasants subsist chiefly upon coarse bread and vegetables; they sell all their farm produce. Apples are as plentiful round Kursk as they are at Tula, and the peasant families have each a large tub in which they keep soaked apples for consumption during the winter. I have been assured that when thus preserved the apples are "quite tasty." There are many large factories in the Kursk government which draw the young people towards the towns, without improving their morals. Recent statistics have proved that the *remote* villages of Central Russia are remarkably free from crime.

The peasants of the Black-Earth region manure their fields in August, plough them in September, and sow the spring corn in the same month. Poor peasants who have little cattle are unable to manure their fields sufficiently, and their land suffers in consequence. The spring corn, sown in September, is harvested in the following August. Very little vegetable gardening is done in this region, because there are no markets to create a demand, as in the vicinity of large towns; but the peasants grow cucumbers, onions, potatoes, turnips and carrots for their own use. Almost every village has at least one man in it who cultivates bees; the village priest often adds something to his scanty income by this occupation. Lime trees are plentiful, and lime honey is produced in great quantities, but there are two other kinds for which this region is equally famed, its forest honey, and its meadow honey, respectively. The priests also take great pains with their flower gardens, and the monastery gardens are carefully attended to by the monks, and full of flowers in early summer.

In conversation with some of the thinking Russians of Kursk I learned that, poor as the peasants are, their lot is not so hard as that of a large and rapidly increasing class of men and women to be found in the provincial towns, who have spent the little their parents could scrape together for them in getting an education sufficient to make

them dissatisfied with their lot, but not good enough to set them on a better footing. There are no charitable societies to help such people, and they get little pity when in distress. Unfitted by their training for manual labour, and not sufficiently specialised to earn their living by their brains, their position is in every way a wretched one. This intellectual proletariat forms a large part of Russia's middle class, which has itself only come into existence during the last quarter of a century.* Every man who has passed through a gymnasium belongs to the middle class. A poor man who saves a little money for his children spends it in giving them an education that is practically useless as a means of support, simply because he sees no other way of helping them to start in life. The same man would gladly send his daughter to a school for dress-making, or his son to learn the shoe-making trade, if good technical schools were within his reach, but they are not, and the only way open to him by which he can get his child taught a respectable trade is to apprentice him to a hard master, of whose cruel sweating system every conscientious parent has a righteous dread.

The priests in the villages of the Black-Earth region live in a poverty that corresponds to that of their parishioners; they go from house to house begging for money to keep them going; the poorer the village the less they get to live on, and the more they are compelled to charge for sacraments, funerals, weddings, or christenings. The peasants have no fear of death if only they have received the last Sacrament, and the priest who refuses to come to the bedside of a dying man till he has been paid for his services is sure of getting the sum he asks. After a funeral the priest is always invited to a meal in the house of the bereaved family. Everybody gets drunk on such occasions, the priest included; were he to remian sober he would be despised. Directly a young man marries he

* The prevailing idea, in England, that Russia is still without a middle class is a mistaken one. The more opulent section of this class is composed mainly of Jews and Germans.

moves away from his father's home and starts an independent one; here, too, the patriarchal system has been uprooted, and no young wife will consent to live within earshot of her mother-in-law.

With all its poverty and with all its disadvantages, arising from the insufficiency of factories, towns and commerce, the Black-Earth region has furnished Russia with more great men than any other part of the Empire. Writers, poets, artists, critics, philosophers, geographers, actors—I cannot attempt to enumerate all the great names that are so closely associated with this part of Russia; most of them would be unfamiliar to English ears; of Tolstoi I have already spoken; Lermontoff, Dostoievsky and Turguenieff are familiar to us all.

The government of Tamboff, in the Black-Earth region, is a great horse-breeding centre; rich and poor alike, the peasant as well as the nobleman, all take an interest in the rearing of horses. An elderly Englishwoman who had been for many years a governess in the families of noblemen in Tamboff, when I asked her to tell me something about that part, replied that the only interest in life there was the rearing of horses. Russia is richer in horses than any other country in the world; she possessed before the present war more than twenty-two millions, which means that there were on an average some twenty-six horses to every hundred inhabitants. It is not known how many horses there are in Asiatic Russia, but it is certain that European Russia and Asiatic Russia taken together contain more than half the horses in the world.*

* See "Die Russische Pferderasse," by Simonoff.

CHAPTER XXI.

KHARKOFF.

Effect of the sunlight—Population of Kharkoff—University—Railway engineers—First historical reference—The great fair—High rents—Changes of temperature—Bad servants—Esthonian servants—Letts—Famous professors—Handsome churches—A holy picture—The richest sheep-breeder—Philanthropy—People's Palace—Shops of Kharkoff—Favourable position for trade—Little Russians—Day dreaming—Lovers of Nature—Love songs—Bright colour—The honoured guest—Comparison between Great Russians and Little Russians—A great delicacy—Position of the women—Strange customs—Increase of population—Absence of the birch tree—Beetroot—Attractions of Poltava.

As the train carried us still southwards, from Kursk to Kharkoff, we were struck with the number of windmills that dotted the country on either side of us. Built of wood, like the isbas of the north, they had the same familiar silvery-grey appearance, and looked ready to fall to pieces with age. The sunlight, which plays so important a part in Russian scenery, lit up the thatched roofs of the peasant dwellings, and the straw shone like gold. Without the sun there was a dead, lifeless look about the cottages till we were approaching Kharkoff, when they became more spruce and tidy, their roofs were better thatched, and their whitewashed walls visible to the eye. We had reached Little Russia, where the lot of the peasant is not quite so hard as in the Black-Earth region, and where the bread he eats is a degree less coarse.

Kharkoff is one of the most important towns in the south of the Empire, with nearly one hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants. As an educational centre for the higher and middle classes, Kharkoff holds the first place in Little

Russia.* It has a university with one thousand five hundred students; a technological institute with four hundred students; a seminary for the sons of priests; a veterinary institute; three gymnasia for boys and six for girls; and a commercial school. It has also a school for railway engineers, and numerous other schools for the lower classes. But Kharkoff is equally important as a trading centre, and was so long before the days of the railways, though it cannot be called an old town. The first historical reference to Kharkoff bears the date, March, 1656; she is there referred to as a town in the course of construction. Four important fairs have been held at Kharkoff every year for at least two centuries. The autumn fair is the great event of the year; we arrived the day before its opening, and found every hotel filled with merchants and commercial travellers. The Pokrovsky† Fair lasts three weeks, and while it lasts the town has an exceptionally active and business-like appearance. Since the arrival of railways this fair has, of course, declined in importance; it is now simply a meeting together of business men, and there is no longer the visible buying and selling that one still finds at Nijni Novgorod. One can hardly compare the two, for Nijni Novgorod is a connecting link between Asia and Europe, and a mart for the two continents—the only European market to which Asiatics can get without travelling by rail, and for that reason the Nijni Novgorod fair is likely to keep up its old character for some time to come.

Rents are higher in Kharkoff than in St. Petersburg. Most of the houses are built with only two storeys, and

* Kohl, who visited Kharkoff in 1842, wrote: "There are four booksellers' shops in Kharkoff—three Russian, where they sell books by the pound and learning by the ell, and one French, whose owner boasts of valuing his intellectual wares by their intrinsic worth; for his books he finds a sale by combining with his literary dealings a trade in wine, liquors and cigars. Nevertheless, some progress is making, for Kharkoff contained but one bookseller fifteen years ago."

† "Furs in Russia are examined and valued with the same minute care as diamonds are with us. Shelikoff, one of the merchants of the great American Fur Company, assured me that he had bought 600,000 roubles worth of skins in the Kharkoff fair." Kohl.

this reduces the amount of available room. Work is very dear, and living is comparatively expensive. Kharkoff lies in the same latitude as Paris, but its winters are more severe and its summers warmer. Residents complain of the sudden changes from hot to cold in spring and autumn, and *vice versâ*. One day there will be 10° of cold, Réaumur, and the next 5° of heat. Sleighs take the place of carriages for about two weeks in the depth of winter.

Little Russians make very poor servants and are so untrustworthy that every one who can do so employs Ests or Letts in preference. Many send to Esthonia for servants, for these have a name for honesty and industry, virtues rare in Little Russia. Many of the clerks employed in business houses are Letts, who have their own Lett Club, to which no other nationality is admitted. I may remark here that the Letts are, among the Czar's subjects, in comparison to their numbers, the most revolutionary. They belong chiefly to the Lutheran faith, and, where there is a large community of them, the Lutheran pastor is usually a Lett, who holds the church services in that language. The Letts are Arians, and of all European languages theirs approaches nearest to the Sanscrit.

The names of many famous professors have from time to time been connected with that of the Kharkoff University. When it was opened some of the greatest teachers in Europe received an invitation to join its staff. Amongst those invited were Laplace and Fichte; but at that time the funds of the University were not adequate and, though quite willing to come to Russia, these, and many others, were compelled to refuse. Professor Schad, however, the well-known philosopher, came over from Magdeburg in 1817, and several others of equal fame followed his example. One of the best known names in Kharkoff to-day is that of the famous oculist, Hirschman, who is of Hebrew extraction. There are several other Jewish professors, and the town has some wealthy Jewish merchants; petty tradesmen and artisans of that race are not allowed to reside in any of the large Russian towns,

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Catherine Street, Kharkoff.

[*To face page* 258.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

but many Jews get the right to live in Kharkoff by marrying Christians and being baptised.

There are some handsome Orthodox churches, and in one of the monasteries there resides, during the six winter months—from October to April—a holy picture of great notoriety. It spends the summer months in a monastery several versts distant from the town. We were in Kharkoff on the day fixed for its return home. The shops were shut, and it was like a bank holiday. Peasants streamed into the town from far and near. Six men carried the picture on a sort of bier, and the people crushed round them to try and touch it, believing that it possessed miraculous healing power; it is quite a small picture, and represents the Virgin Mary. The governor of the town and all the great men of the university went out to fetch it, and walked behind it on foot the whole way. The procession arrived about midday, and there was a service held in the cathedral, to which peasants and pilgrims flocked in dense crowds. We did not attempt to go ourselves, for a German resident had pictured to us most vividly the state of the atmosphere in the sacred edifice on such occasions, and assured us that no *German* could stand it for a moment.

The richest sheep-breeder in Russia resides in the neighbourhood of Kharkoff; he possesses more flocks than perhaps any other man in Europe; many of them are composed entirely of black sheep. The week we were at Kharkoff there was an anecdote in one of the local newspapers to the effect that two men, perfect strangers to one another, were chatting in a railway train approaching the town, when one of them began to boast about his large flocks of sheep; he proceeded to enumerate them for the other's benefit, and then waited to see what effect he had produced.

"I have as many flocks as you have sheep," was the careless reply.

"Then you are Falzfein, or you lie," was the quick rejoinder; and it was, in truth, the great sheep-breeder himself.

In the year 1900 there were three and a half million sheep in Little Russia, and of these nearly three million were the private property of peasants; they obtain from them clothing, food, and fuel.

There are many kind-hearted and charitable people in Kharkoff who throw their whole energies into helping the poor and educating them. Free lectures, Sunday-schools, for adults as well as children, and a handsome People's Palace, are some of the satisfactory results which have begun to crown their efforts. The "Society for the Promotion of Learning in the Government of Kharkoff" has more than a thousand members. The People's Palace was opened in February, 1903; we were taken to see it by a lady who is heart and soul in the work; its theatre holds a thousand people, every seat commanding a good view of the stage; fifty-four plays were performed here during the first year; four literary and musical evenings were given; seven concerts; one dance to the members of the society; and five lectures. There is a spacious and cheerful dining-room, where the members can get a good dinner for a merely nominal price. Five kopecks (one penny farthing) are charged for a large plate of vegetable soup, and the same sum for a substantial plate of meat or pudding. The libraries and reading-room are free to all. The walls of the rooms are hung with paintings and portraits that have been presented by friends of the undertaking. Dressmaking classes have been instituted for the benefit of the young women, and other branches of technical training for both sexes will soon be in progress.

The shops of Kharkoff have handsome plate-glass windows, and quite a Parisian appearance. The first-class droshkies are large comfortable carriages, drawn by fine horses, with an astonishingly low tariff. Ladies of moderate incomes can do their shopping with carriage and pair, or take a pleasant drive, without feeling that they have been extravagant. It is a peculiarity of Russian towns that the handsomest and most imposing edifice is almost always a bank; this is the case even in Kharkoff, in spite

of the fact that it is a university town. The position of the town is particularly favourable for trade; it lies on the great trading route which connects Central Russia with the Black Sea and the Caspian, and is in direct communication by rail with all the important centres of European Russia. It has upwards of two hundred and fifty factories, and these give employment to nearly eleven thousand workmen. Its annual trade is valued at sixteen million roubles.

The Little Russians are more truly Slavs than the Great Russians, there is less Finnish blood in their veins; the peasants are taller and more robust. Anthropologists who have compared their skulls with those found in recently excavated Slav tumuli, say that the head of the Little Russian is brachycephalic and more closely resembles that of the ancient Slav than does the head of the Great Russian. As regards character, the Little Russians have several very distinctive traits; first and foremost, they are slow in their movements, and of all the Slavs the laziest; they seem incapable of doing their work with quickness and energy, and are constantly day-dreaming and falling into reveries. Their nature is decidedly poetical, and they are very musical. The Little Russian is a lover of nature, a simple-minded fellow, perfectly free from the cynicism of the Great Russian, but gifted at the same time with a remarkably stubborn disposition; he holds fast to an opinion once formed, and is very difficult to lead. He has withal a tender heart, and is a good husband and father. The love-songs of Little Russia are distinguished by their great tenderness.

Peasants in the neighbourhood of forests build their houses of wood, but those who cannot obtain that material so easily build their walls with brushwood and cover them with clay, and thatch their roofs with straw or rushes. Whitewashed walls are typical of Little Russia, and to the English eye there is something quite familiar in the appearance of their neatly-thatched roofs and white walls. Every cottage has a high hedge round it with a gate, en-

closing a flower and kitchen garden. The chief entrance to the cottage always faces the south. These people have a great love for bright colours, and decorate their rooms with striped or checked red and white towels, the former of which might, at a distance, be mistaken for Moorish ones. The ikon shelf is always decorated with these fancy towels, and often with home-made paper flowers as well. An honoured guest is always given a seat under the ikon, before which a little lamp is kept burning on feast days. The clay stove occupies as usual a fourth of the living-room of the family. The floors are of clay with pieces of wood laid upon it to sleep on. Each family has its treasure trunk, metal bound and brightly coloured. The peasant women who crowded into Kharkoff in the train of the holy picture wore red turbans with embroidered borders, their longer skirts were also embroidered, the border reaching nearly to the knee. With them the skirt is a comparatively modern institution; they formerly wore two aprons overlapping, one in front and one behind. On great occasions they wear a velvet tunic without sleeves, embroidered at neck and armholes. The men wear shirts embroidered in red and blue. Both sexes wear top-boots in the country, and hang them over their shoulders when they come into the towns. At home the girls often wear red shoes turned up at the toes, called *chereveké;* these are frequently mentioned in their songs. The young women are very good-looking, with their gipsy complexions, dark brown hair, and grey eyes.* A girl usually wears her hair in one plait, and ties the end with long ribbons. In summer it is the custom for maidens to wear regular garlands of twisted ribbons; coral and glass beads are much worn by them as necklaces. Better food has probably a great deal to do with better looks; the Little Russians have a kinder climate and a richer soil than the Great Russians; consequently the earth yields them a more varied supply of nourishment. There are one

* I once saw a bottle of glass eyes for sale in a shop in Kieff, they were nearly all grey.

or two articles of food and drink which I must not omit to mention as peculiar to this part of Russia, such, for instance, as *salô*, or bacon-fat salted. This is considered a great delicacy, and every peasant family keeps a store of it ready for consumption. A piece of *salô* is a favourite present for a Little Russian to take to friends in Great Russia. Having heard the praises of *salô* highly sung I tried it, but found it too much like salted tallow to be agreeable; it is to Little Russia what shortbread is to Scotland. There is a kind of *Kvas*, or cider, made of pears and apples, which is very popular; also a liqueur made from berries, which is much drunk by the children as well as by adults, and a kind of spiced brandy. In recent years tea has to some extent taken the place of these fermented drinks; but spirits of every kind are cheap here, and drunkenness is still painfully frequent among both men and women. The women enjoy a better position and higher esteem than do their Great Russian sisters. There is a proverb to the effect that without the master the yard weeps, and that without the mistress the house weeps. The woman is really mistress in her own house. Divorce occurs rarely, but quarrels, resulting in separation, are frequent. They have a queer custom that a woman may do what she likes on a Monday, and, sad to relate, many of them spend that day in gossiping and drinking vodka in the taverns. Some Russian writers affirm that more crime is committed by the women of Little Russia than by the men, and account for it by the fact that the women have the most energy. However that may be, they lead a more moral life than other Russian women. The door of a bad woman is tarred that she may feel herself in disgrace. In the winter evenings the younger women gather together to sing and work. A proverb warns the young man in search of a wife to choose with his ears rather than with his eyes. A child is swaddled carefully with red and black bands as soon after its birth as possible, with the idea that these will keep the devil from getting into the infant; this notion is peculiar to

the peasants of Little Russia. When some one has died in the house a glass of water is placed in the window, that the spirit may wash itself in departing. A neighbour digs the grave, and is rewarded for this friendly service by a seat at the funeral repast. The dead person is carried out of the house feet foremost, so that he may not return. Formerly women were hired to wail, but that custom has been given up. Every girl has her wedding-dress got ready as soon as she is considered old enough to be married, and if she dies before her wedding it becomes her shroud. Every guest on returning from a funeral must go up to the stove and touch it with the right hand. There are songs in Little Russia for all occasions, both sacred and profane. The Imperial chapel at St. Petersburg gets its singers from Little Russia.

The population of Little Russia increases more steadily than that of Great Russia, for the simple reason that the people are greatly attached to home, and do not like to wander far from the scenes of their childhood. Their language is nearer to the old Slavonic than that of the rest of Russia; Gogol wrote several comedies in it. From what has been said it will be seen that in soil, climate, architecture, costume, character, customs and language, Little Russia differs from Great Russia to a degree that has not perhaps been sufficiently recognised, either by students of the Slav race, or by travellers from the west of Europe, who have given us their impressions of the country as a whole.*

But a word more about Kharkoff. The town does not stand upon a high river-bank like Kursk, or upon three hills like Kieff; her position is consequently neither so striking nor so picturesque; nevertheless, her beautiful oak forests, which begin where the houses end and extend for miles on two sides of her, are a charm which her sister towns do not possess. Further north than Kharkoff you never see an oak in Russia, and where the oak begins

* For further particulars about the Little Russians, see M. Semenoff's "Malorossia," 1903.

the birch disappears; Russians from the north, settling at Kharkoff never quite get over the absence of this passionately-loved tree, with its slim white stem, and its graceful aspen-like foliage. "I miss the dear birch trees every day of my life," remarked a lady from the Baltic Provinces, "they are so sympathetic," and I understood the feeling, for I had myself experienced a similar one when travelling for so many thousands of miles without meeting with a single elm, or, indeed, with a single thick-stemmed tree of any kind, like those of my own country. Even the oaks of Kharkoff are quite different from ours; most of them are stunted, bushlike, and straggling. The grand old oak we love so much in the south of England is a sight unknown in Russia. Yet, the Russian forests have their own beauty, and in the art galleries of that country there are more paintings of real forest scenery than in those of all the rest of Europe put together. The governments of Kharkoff and Poltava have for their soil the rich black earth I have already alluded to, and, added to this, their climate is more propitious than that of the Black-Earth region. Much beetroot is grown, and both tomatoes and water-melons are cultivated with great success in the government of Kharkoff. A railway line belonging to a private company connects Kharkoff with Poltava, the distance between the two towns being a hundred and forty-one versts. Poltava is by far the older town; she dates from the eighth century, though her name does not appear in history till the year 1174. In 1709 Peter the Great beat Charles XII. of Sweden at Poltava, after that monarch had besieged the town for three months, and lost more than six thousand men; besides a handsome monument commemorating this victory, there is little to attract the traveller to Poltava, though he must pass that way if he wishes to journey direct from Kharkoff to Kieff.

CHAPTER XXII.

SEBASTOPOL.

From Kharkoff to Sebastopol—Steppes of South Russia—Steppes of the Crimea—Glorious sunshine—Simpheropol—Museum and library—Crimean agriculture—The fruit garden of Russia—Melons—Bakshisarai—Scene at the railway station—Mixed population—Books on the Crimea—Sebastopol in 1873—Inkerman—Tunnels—Hotel Vetzel—Russian invalids—The Crimean Alpine Club—Practical guide-books—No Cook's tourists—Museum of relics from Crimean war—French cemetery—Crimean heroes—English cemetery—Cathgart's Hill—Visitors' book—Beautiful flowers—Gardener's enthusiasm—Reading the inscriptions—Youthful soldiers—Greek colonists—Better than friends—Russell's "Crimea"—Charge of the Light Brigade—Port Arthur, not Sebastopol—View of Sebastopol from Cathgart's Hill—A Greek temple—Eye-witnesses quoted—"Keep out of Sebastopol"—English officer's testimony—Anecdote—Sebastopol at the close of the siege—A women's battery—Kinglake and Russian bravery.

WE left Kharkoff at 4 p.m. in the afternoon and reached Sebastopol—the Russian Portsmouth—the following morning at 10.30. The first hour of the journey had brought us to Borky, the spot where Alexander II. and his family had their marvellous escape from the terrible railway accident; the carriage in which the Emperor was breakfasting was broken in two, and his favourite dog killed as it sat at his feet. No one seems to know what caused the accident, but we do know that a new Minister of Ways and Communications was appointed the very next day. A fine church now marks the memorable spot. After Borky the forest steppe began to merge into real steppe; trees became more scarce and soon disappeared altogether, and there was nothing to be seen but brown grass. Trees cannot grow in the steppes of South Russia on account of the salt in the chalky soil which lies beneath a thin layer of fertile earth and injures all roots that strike any depth.

This dreary landscape of arid steppe continued to cheer our eyes till we had approached within half an hour's journey of Sebastopol. The Crimea's weak spot, so to speak, is its scarcity of springs and rivers, and to this we must attribute its barren look.* We wondered when the so enthusiastically extolled beauties of the Crimea were going to begin. As our train entered the railway station of Simpheropol brilliant sunshine was already pouring into the windows, and crowds of young people in midsummer attire were moving about on the platform. The weather was literally perfect. The air was so clear and so light that one felt buoyed up and cheerful, because one could not feel otherwise. There was nothing oppressive except the direct rays of the sun, which were scorching. Everybody looked happy. The people seemed more like one large picnic-party on pleasure bent than ordinary travellers going their individual ways.

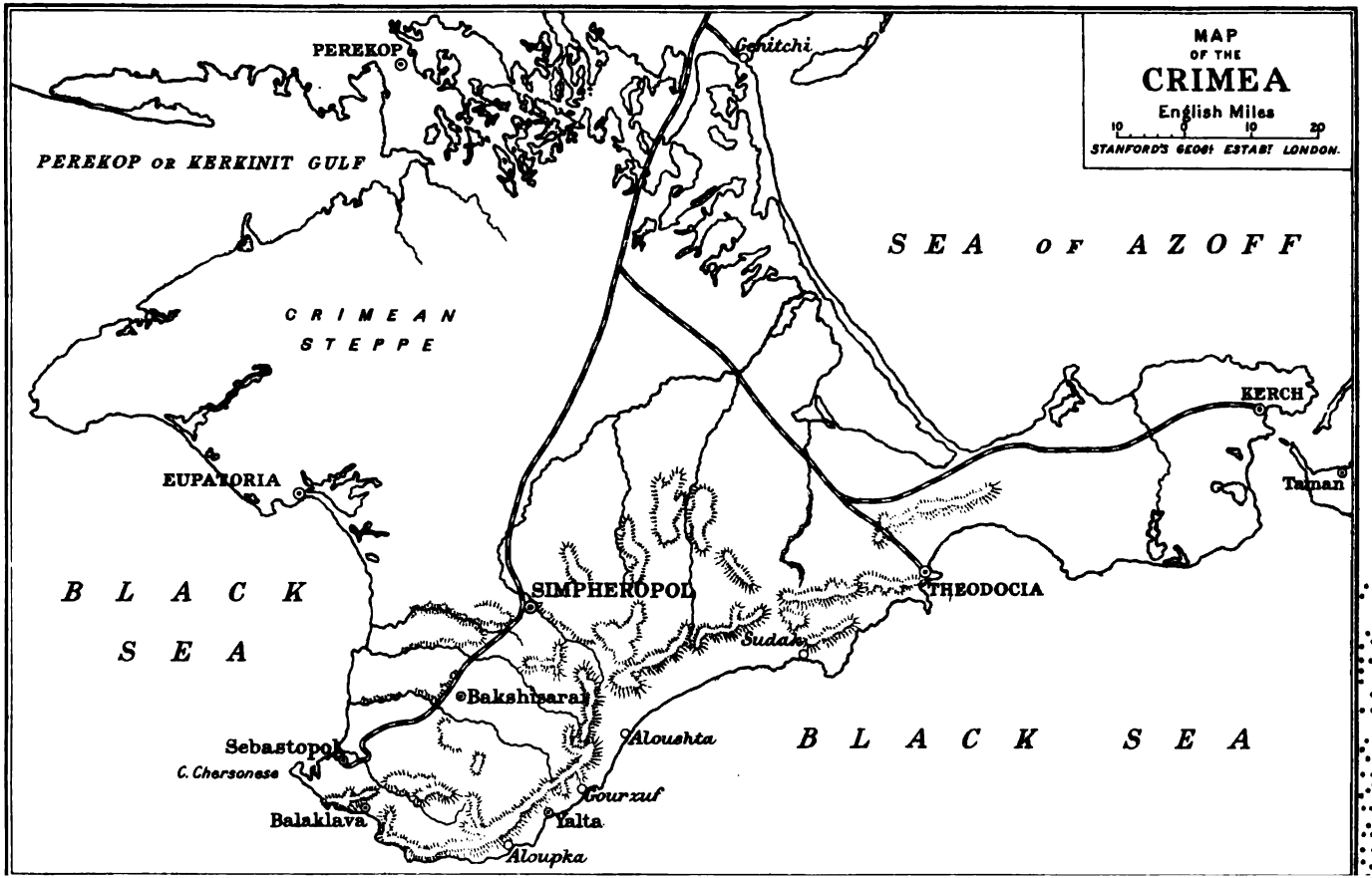
There have been great changes in Simpheropol during the last few years; it is now a flourishing town with sixty thousand inhabitants. It derives its name from the Greek words συμφερω, to collect, and πολις, a town; and as far as nationalities are concerned Simpheropol is, indeed, a collection, its population being composed of Russians, Tatars, Poles, Armenians, gypsies, Karaite Jews, other Jews, Greeks, and many more. The town dates from the second century. When the Tatars took possession of it they gave it the name of *Ak-Meshed*, or the White Mosque, and the Mohammedan part still goes by that appellation. Simpheropol is the seat of the Crimean administration, and it is there that the Governor-General resides; this town is the chief centre of intellectual culture in the Crimea for Tatars as well as Russians; it has many good schools and colleges. The natural history museum, to which admission is free on Sundays, contains the best collection in existence of the flora, fauna, and geology of the peninsula; attached to the museum is a library of some two thousand books, many of which are

* Milner makes a strange mistake in stating that rice is cultivated in the Crimea.

devoted to the subject of Crimean agriculture and fruit-growing. Large quantities of apples, pears, melons, and grapes are annually exported to the north of Russia from Simpheropol. The Crimea is looked upon as the fruit garden of Russia; nevertheless, I must own that nothing disappointed me so much as the quality of the fruit grown there. During my two autumn tours in the peninsula I never once met with a good eating apple or pear. The grapes make excellent wine, but I have seen none that English people would care to put before their friends as dessert. On my second visit I carefully inspected the fruit stalls of Sebastopol, Yalta, and other places; only two melons did I come across that were not water-melons, and these we bought and ate; they were about the best fruit as regards quality that I had met with there. Yet whatever may be the quality of the fruit, the stalls on which it is so abundantly displayed are truly a remarkable sight; their very number astonishes the traveller.

The next station we halted at was that of Bakshisarai, the ancient Tatar capital. Here the scene was even more bright and varied; the platform was ablaze with hot sunshine; ladies and gentlemen were walking about or meeting friends, all in the lightest of summer clothing; white muslin blouses and airy straw hats covered with flowers were the order of the day. No one living in St. Petersburg had dared to go so lightly clad even in July and August, and this was the last week in October. Tatars with red fezes were offering fruit to tired and thirsty travellers. An incredible number of black and green grapes disappeared from the stalls in the short space of five minutes. We could see from the train windows a number of comfortable two-horse conveyances, covered with clean white awning, ready to take visitors to the palace of the Khans; to the fountain of tear-drops immortalised by Poushkin; and to Tchufut Kalé, the stone village, hewn, it is now believed, by the early Christians, but no one knows when or how, in the rocky side of a high hill.* This outing

* Until quite recently Tchufut Kalé was supposed to be the work of Jews.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THEODOCIA
Sudak
Bakshisarai
Aloushta
BLACK SEA
Sebastopol
C. Chersonese
Gourzuf
Balaklava
Yalta
Aloupka

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is a favourite one for young Russian couples on their honeymoon. The hotels at Bakshisarai are beginning to be fairly comfortable, and it is necessary to spend at least one night there in order to do justice to all its interesting sights; which, however, as I do not propose to do the work of a Baedeker, I shall not attempt to describe. The Tatar town lies in a depression between two hills, and there runs alongside of the bazaar a little river called *Churuk Su*, or putrid water. To anyone attracted by Eastern peoples a walk through the bazaar of Bakshisarai is as full of interest as a visit to the Khan's palace, which is fast becoming a modern show-place, and losing the atmosphere of reality which used to characterise it. The Tatar population numbers about ten thousand; the surplus—about two thousand—is made up of Russians, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. There are so many Armenian articles displayed in the shops that one is strongly reminded of Tiflis. The town contains thirty-six mosques. There is a daily paper published both in the Russian and Tatar languages; this reminds me that when I visited Jerusalem in the year 1898 it had not yet started a newspaper in any language, in spite of the fact that it had more European residents than Bakshisarai has to-day.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century English people possessed astonishingly little information about the Crimea; but when the war broke out in 1854 books on the subject began to appear one after another in rapid succession. Within a couple of years the public had had enough, and the demand ceased. I think I may say without exaggeration that no book of value on the Crimea has appeared in our country since the year 1856. A lady traveller, who spent a few days at Sebastopol in 1873, found little left of the handsome seaport town that visitors before the Crimean war were so enthusiastic in describing. "Surely," she wrote, "such a mass of ruin was never before seen! With the exception of here and there a shattered doorway or a flight of steps, which led to nothing, the foundations of the houses alone remained erect. Every

vestige of glass and wood had been destroyed or removed. Not a human being was to be seen in the grass-grown street. We passed a large domed church which appeared to be shut up. The highway was as solitary as a thoroughfare in Pompeii." What would Mrs. Guthrie say if she could see the Sebastopol of to-day? A new city has risen upon the foundations of the old; churches that stood in ruins have been practically rebuilt, and others have been added. The desolate and grass-grown thoroughfares are now handsome streets, full of bustling activity and lined with thriving shops.

To our left, as the train approached Sebastopol, we passed the Inkerman monastery, built into the sides of the steep cliff bearing that memorable name. It was a few minutes earlier that the conductor had made a tour of inspection through all the carriages to see that they were furnished with candles in readiness for two or three half-minute tunnels through which we were to pass; these tunnels followed one another so quickly that they seemed like the disjointed pieces of a single tunnel rather than separate ones. I should not have thought them worthy of remark were it not for the interesting fact that they are the only railway tunnels in European Russia. Arrived at the imposing railway station of Sebastopol, we alighted amidst as gay a scene as those I have described, and made our way through the commodious first-class waiting-room to the flight of steps at the foot of which a number of basket-work conveyances, lined with bright red velvet, and sheltered from the sun by umbrella awnings of gleaming white, stood ready for the use of visitors. Every conveyance was provided with two fine long-tailed horses. A single horse would have found it hard work to draw even one person with luggage up the steep hill-side in that broiling sun, which seemed as if it would burn a hole in my cloth jacket, so intensely did it concentrate its force upon one's shoulders. Handsome houses of white stone gleamed between the foliage of the trees lining the broad streets, and tall officers, military as well as naval, clad in spotless white, were to be seen strolling in the company of Riviera-

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Rock Monastery at Inkerman.

[*To face page* 270.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

dressed ladies, or hurrying along to club or work. Every now and then we met, or passed, a batch of sunburnt sailor-boys, also in snowy white, with sky-blue ribbons fluttering from their caps and blue borders of the same hue to their wide collars. We had told our coachman to drive us to the Grand Hotel, but the attractive appearance of Hotel Vetzel led us to change our minds, and we put up there instead; there was something particularly inviting about its pretty trellis-work verandah, ornamented with creepers, and cooled by a fountain in its centre; the fountain was covered with bold and loudly-chirping sparrows, and guarded by a lively cockatoo, who divided his time between calling out good-naturedly to the passers-by, and plucking at his brilliant feathers, which were every colour of the rainbow. As many little tables as the verandah could comfortably hold were packed into it; we had eaten our lunch at one of them, and were watching the people in the street, when an old lady at the next table enquired whether we going to Yalta, and furnished us, unasked, with the useful information that we should certainly be requested to pay twenty roubles for our drive thither, but that we must on no account give more than fifteen. Hotel Vetzel stands on the spot where Korniloff's house once stood, and is built with at least some of its identical stones. The hotel was started by the father of its present owner, who was porter at the Officers' Club till that building was destroyed in the siege. Mrs. Guthrie's account of her experiences at Hotel Vetzel in 1873 is very amusing. In those days the guests all dined together at one long table, and Herr Vetzel slept upon it when the nights were warm. The lady's feelings, when she saw from her window in the moonlight so corpse-like a figure stretched motionless on the dining-table beneath a white sheet, are well described in her book.

The Crimea is resorted to every winter by many thousands of Russians suffering from pulmonary complaints, or with constitutions too delicate to brave the polar winds of the north. Every year more sanatoria and boarding-

houses for invalids are being opened in all the more sheltered spots of the Russian Riviera. At Sebastopol there is an "Anti-Tuberculosis Society," which supplies to invalids all the information they may require before deciding where to take up their abode; it also looks into deserving cases where funds are scarce, and supplies material help as well as advice to those in distress. People who can afford it are asked to give a rouble towards the general funds in return for information received.

The "Crimean Alpine Club," founded in 1902, has a branch at Sebastopol, and its members arrange excursions to places of interest in the neighbourhood. Seven hundred Russian tourists availed themselves of these excursions in the summer and autumn of 1903. In the spring of 1904 an excellent series of practical guides for Russian travellers to various parts of Russia began to appear, and several of them were on sale in the local book-shops before the close of the year; they resemble Baedeker in size and colour, but their matter is less condensed and their print is clearer. I found the one on the Crimea quite up-to-date and thoroughly reliable. It only remains for them to be translated into German, French, or English, so that travellers from other parts of Europe may also be able to use them. Very few English or American tourists visit the Crimea, and we found considerable difficulty in getting the manager of the bank, indicated upon a letter of credit as Messrs. Cook and Sons' correspondent, to believe that there really was in existence a tourist agency of that name; instead of handing me money in place of my cheque, he remarked dubiously, after I had waited a full hour while he made enquiries, that no one in the bank had ever heard the name of Cook. It was not until I had decided to telegraph to London that he let me have the money; that is to say, he gave me ninety-four roubles and forty kopecks for a cheque on Messrs. Cook's Bank for ten pounds. It is remarkable how English money begins to melt away when you turn it into roubles. A rouble will not go so far in Russia as a two-shilling piece with us.

One of the first things that tourists wish to see in Sebastopol is the museum of relics connected with the Crimean war. Its walls are covered with all kinds of weapons mixed up with atrocious pictures of the siege, and chalk portraits of its heroes; models of the ships which took part in the defence are also displayed there. The museum being open every day, and the admission free, the lower classes visit it in great numbers, and gaze with awe and reverence at many things that are quite beyond their comprehension.

We drove out one fine morning across the bare undulating hills to the cemetery where France interred her Crimean heroes. An avenue of small trees led to the gate, and a couple of furiously yelling dogs showed by their efforts to reach us that they would like to tear visitors to pieces. A high wall enclosed a number of unattractive mausoleum-like buildings or little chapels, in the centre of which there was a larger one; all were decorated with painted metal wreaths; there was not a real flower in sight, though a threatening notice in French and Russian forbade us to destroy the flower-beds. The names of ten generals were inscribed upon the front wall of the larger chapel, and those of six lieutenant-colonels on the right wall; the other walls were covered with names of officers of lower rank.* The whole thing had a stiff and, at the same time, a neglected and melancholy appearance, very different from that of the English cemetery, which we visited on the following day.

The cemetery where the English laid their heroes lies also about two miles from the town, but in another direction, in the centre of the plateau-like surface of Cathgart's Hill. It also is surrounded by a high wall, but, unlike the French one, it has nothing melancholy about it. An old German gardener lives in the little lodge, and devotes his days to this sacred spot in the wilderness, which he and his two assistants have transformed into a beautiful garden; he welcomed us pleasantly, and at once opened a large

* The local guide book says that eighty generals, two thousand officers and eighty-eight thousand soldiers are interred there.

visitors' book that we might enter our names; but a moment later, before we had begun to write, he fetched another and a smaller one and begged us to put our names in that instead. He had guessed somehow that we were English, and the smaller book was reserved for British visitors; it had been left there in April, 1895, by an officer who had served in the Crimean war as A.D.C. to Lord Raglan. There were very few names in it. Passing through the lodge into the cemetery we could hardly see the tombs for the beautiful flowers that covered them. Brilliant crimson, and yellow dahlias with bright green leaves, clumps of blossoming cacti, and bushes covered with red and white roses, stood in hedge-like thickness round many of the larger monuments, while the more modest graves were transformed into so many flower-beds; here was a mass of sweet-smelling heliotropes, there a patch of fiery geraniums, and yonder a bed of autumn pansies and pelargonia, with paths between them shaded by graceful pepper trees and acacias.

"These beds are always full of flowers," said the old man, pleased with the effect that the sight of his garden had produced upon us. "A month or two ago the cemetery was one bed of lilies; I had planted thousands of lily bulbs, and when they were in flower their scent was carried over the steppe for miles. Ah! they were a sight to see! In spring I put in hyacinths and tulips, two hundred in one bed, and all with an eye to colour. I know the exact shade of red or yellow or blue that the flowers of each bulb or root will have, and I arrange them accordingly. In the winter I plant out chrysanthemums, gold and white and violet. My best results are from flowers I have myself raised from the seed. Look at that pelargonium over the porch; it is one of my seedlings."

We turned our eyes to the lodge, and feasted them on the splendid bloom of a pelargonium ten feet high, which almost hid the little porch from sight.

"Here we have the *Souvenir de Rome* and *L'enfant de Bonn*," continued the old man, pointing to the respective

blossoms. "I should like to tell you the history of those two flowers; they are wonderful results of art," and he gave it us in full.

"This plant," he then continued, "with the delicate green-and-white leaf, is the *abutela;* its flower is red, but you have come too late to see it bloom. All these I raised from the seed; it would cost too much money to get them any other way. I have not been here quite two years yet; you would see things far more beautiful a little later on. There are my oleanders; that tree is the *Robinia pseudo acacia*, a tree from the East Indies; the tree you are looking at just now is what the Germans call the *Griechen Götter Baum;* it was always planted in the graves round the Greek temples; its real name is *Ailandus klandulosus*. Here is the *Amictatus pernica rubra floreplena;* at Easter it is one mass of bloom, without a single leaf. Ah, indeed, could I but get enough water, what a dream of beauty this cemetery would be! As it is, our one horse has to fetch every drop from a well a long way off, and my two men have to give half their time to getting it; some day I hope to see water properly laid on."

We now walked round the cemetery and read some of the inscriptions. The most impressive tomb was that on which we read the name of Sir George Cathgart, who commanded the 4th Division at Inkerman, and fell there on November 5th, 1854. Beneath the name it was stated that he had served with the Russian army in the years 1813 and 1814; was A.D.C. to Wellington at Waterloo, and was appointed Governor of the Cape of Good Hope in 1851. One thing struck us very forcibly as we read the inscriptions—the extreme youthfulness of the officers. One of them was only eighteen years of age, many were only nineteen, and a large number were twenty-one and twenty-two, when they sacrificed their lives for their country's fame; some at Inkerman, others at the battle of the Alma, and others again in the trenches before Sebastopol; many, we read, had died of fatigue in the trenches

We found a stone bearing the name of a chaplain who had "died of fever caught in the discharge of his duty," and close by it one with the name of Captain Inglis, who went down with his ship, the unfortunate *Prince*. Many of the monuments had been erected by comrades and others by fellow-officers. A tall obelisk, placed there by the Nation, bears the following words:

To the
Officers
Non-commissioned Officers
and Men
of the
Second Brigade
Light Division
Who fell
1854—1855.

Beside it stood a tall dark cypress, and round it bloomed a profusion of forget-me-nots. It was very pathetic, the thought of so many brave English youths having been torn from their homes and laid to rest in that far-off land before they had reached their twentieth birthday, and all because of the impetuosity of the British public,* who clamoured for war without sufficiently counting the costs, taunted the army for its inactivity, drew invidious comparisons between the generals who were in favour of delay and those who were eager for the enterprise, and published deprecating estimates of the enemy's forces and exaggerated statements of our own. It would be interesting to compare the ages of the young officers who fell in the South African war with those of the Crimean heroes. The boys sent out to the Crimea had had no experience of war; they were practically schoolboys. Once, when commanded to take their stand upon a hill outside Sebastopol which they believed to have been mined by the Russians, they refused point blank. "It was our misfortune," wrote one of the

* See "The Campaign of Sebastopol," by Lieut.-Col. Bruce Hamley, 1854; also Kinglake.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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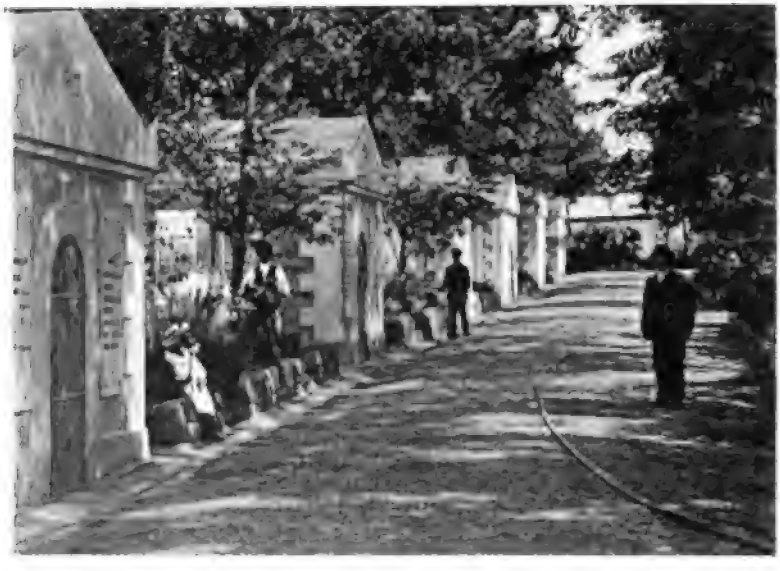
The English Cemetery, Sebastopol.



The French Cemetery, Sebastopol.

[*To face page* 277.

officers, describing the struggle for the Redan Fort, "that the reserve parties which lined the fifth and most advanced parallel were composed mainly of boys, recently arrived and new to the business; a fallacy had gained ground among them that the Redan was mined in every direction, and not all that their officers could say, not the tears that they shed, not even the supplications which they made, could shake that conviction, or induce the men to advance."

The inscriptions had evidently been put upon the tombs by Russian workmen, for many of the English words were incorrectly spelt. For "Henry," in one place, they had put "Henery." The old gardener told us that he had found when digging deep between the graves a number of ancient skulls, also some stones with Greek inscriptions; and that these had been examined by experts, and had led to the belief that the spot had once served as a burial ground for Greek colonists. When we were leaving the cemetery the old man presented us with a beautiful bunch of flowers which he had gathered while we were studying the inscriptions. He refused to let us leave even a rouble towards the expense of his garden.

"Thank you for your kind thought," he added, with great dignity; "but I never take money for my garden, except the twenty pounds which your Government sends me once a year through the consul-general at Odessa, and that I lay out to the very best of my ability."

"You love your flowers," we replied; "that is why you are so successful with them. They are your friends."

"My flowers are better than friends," he answered, smiling.

Inside the lodge we found a portrait of the late Queen Victoria, a plan of the cemetery, with the names of those interred there, and a framed extract from Dr. Russell's* "Crimea." Beneath it was a notice, also in English, to the effect that no one else was ever to be interred in this cemetery, which was always to be kept sacred to the memory of the British soldiers who fell in the Crimean

* Sir William Howard Russell, LL.D.

war. Strange to say, we had come there within three days of the fiftieth anniversary of the "Charge of the Light Brigade," and our picture postcards of Balaclava reached friends in England on the very day on which a dinner was given to the surviving veterans. Our first day in Sebastopol, October 5th (old style), was the fiftieth anniversary of the first bombardment of that town by the combined English and French fleets, and the Russians, proud of the way in which they had sustained the eleven months' siege, had intended to make a great day of it. A magnificent panorama had been painted by one of their greatest artists, and was to have been thrown open to the public on that day. Veterans from France and England were to have been invited to Sebastopol for the occasion, and a newly-built archæological museum was to have been opened. But alas! months before the day arrived all thoughts of these long-prepared-for festivities had been abandoned, and Port Arthur, not Sebastopol, was engrossing the nation's thoughts. The town kept holiday, however, as we found to our cost, for we could neither register a letter, nor get money from the bank—everything was shut. As we left the cemetery our attention was attracted to ten snow-white hens, and a number of black-and-white rabbits, which the old gardener had let out for a run upon the steppe; they were his pets, and shared the affection he gave to his flowers. We drove back to Sebastopol the way we had come, our road lying most of the time in a valley between two scorched hills, but rising at intervals and allowing us a view of the town with its white houses stretching down to the blue waters of the bay beyond. It is to the exquisite azure of her many inlets that the town owes half her charms. There is hardly a point in Sebastopol from which you cannot get a glimpse of the sea in one direction or another. The streets are wide, and well paved with large stones, over which the traffic rattles with merciless noise. On the brow of the highest of the many hills, on the sloping sides of which the houses are built, stands the edifice which fifty years ago

was the most prominent object to the eyes and glasses of the besiegers; it is built like a Greek temple, the temple of Theseus, with forty-eight Doric columns; it was one of the first churches erected by the Russians after they took possession of the Crimea, and is about a hundred and forty years old. It stood practically in ruins for thirty years after the siege, and then the Russian architects wanted to rebuild it in the Byzantine style, but happily the Emperor would not allow it, and commanded that it should be restored, but not altered. Fifty thousand roubles were then expended in repairs. The church had been called by all manner of names by the besieging English; some took it for a club-house, others were confident that it was a theatre; but we read that when Sunday arrived, and it stood unharmed amid the terrible fires of the bombardment, they came to the conclusion that it must be a church. Had it been anything else the Russians would certainly have destroyed it themselves before evacuating the town. "It was a curious instance," wrote an English officer, "of how little damage had been caused in the immediate centre of the town by the allied fire. Two or three balls, or shells, had passed through the roof, and a few must have exploded in front of the building." * So it is there still—fifty years after the siege—the quiet, reposeful, Madeleine-like temple of St. Peter and St. Paul—in my opinion the most beautiful church throughout the length and breadth of the Empire. It commands a splendid view of the town and the harbours, and can itself be seen for miles. Close to it, but not at all prominent, stands the church of St. Vladimir, or the Admiralty church, as it is sometimes called, which was built in memory of the siege, and consecrated in the year 1888; in its crypt lie the remains of the four heroes of the old Black Sea fleet—the Admirals Lazareff, Nachemoff, Istomena and Korniloff. A handsome black marble cross serves as a covering to all four, and a small golden cross in its centre bears their names arranged in such a way as to spell the Greek word νικη.† The Russians are like

* See "Our Tent in the Crimea," 1856. † Victory.

the Britons, in one respect at least; they do not know when they are beaten. To the weary traveller who is tired of sightseeing there appear to be too many public statues in Sebastopol; but there is one, that of the brave Korniloff, on the summit of the eminence known as the *Malakoff Kurgan*, which everyone should visit; it is of bronze, and was only unveiled as recently as October, 1895. Korniloff is seated on a rock, with his right arm outstretched in the direction of Cathgart's Hill. Underneath are the hero's last words (in Russian):—

"Keep out of Sebastopol."

A cross formed of cannon balls marks the spot where he breathed his last. No one who has studied either the English, the French, or the Russian literature of the Crimean war would grudge to that brave admiral the honour that has been shown to him by a grateful country. But for Korniloff, there would, in all probability, have been no defence of Sebastopol.

Speaking of the bravery of the Russians during the siege, an English officer wrote:* "It has been the fashion with some to represent the Russians as untamed brutes, dead to all kind and grateful feelings. Shame on all such general and undistinguishing assertions—libels on human nature! The Russian soldier is an ignorant peasant, and, as such, easily led by fanaticism, and the example of a superior officer, but the Russians treat their soldiers well. They are as alive to kindness as other men." He then gives the following story: "A boat's crew, belonging to an English man-o'-war in the Baltic, fell into the hands of the enemy. The neighbourhood where the English prisoners were landed was a poor one, but the women of the place were eager to give them warm clothing, of which they stood in need. One woman began working a pair of worsted stockings for a sailor, but the order for the removal of the prisoners coming before they were finished, she took her own warm stockings off her feet and gave them to

* See "Our Tent in the Crimea," 1856.

him." At the close of the siege the above-mentioned officer was among the first of the Allies to enter Sebastopol. "We were struck with wonder," he wrote, "at the first sight that presented itself to us on ascending the hill. Between the base of the slope on which we stood and the water of the southern harbour were arranged, in long and close lines, a positively incredible number of *new* guns. There they were, without carriages, but lying in piles—some of large calibre, some of small—ranged up, one above the other, in absolute masses and in perfect order. Further on was an equal amount of *new* shot. An Arabian genius, who had produced nightly all that was needed for the defence of the town, seemed the only explanation of such a superfluity of material." Then he describes the terrible state of the town, and says that there was nothing left for the Allies to plunder. "The value and nature of the plunder," he adds, "was evidenced by a soldier, one of fifteen who were searching there for plunder, who met us at the door of the originally splendid barracks, and showed us what he had rescued after one hour's diligent search—three-quarters of a musket, half a helmet, a sword, a brass ornament, three buttons, a charm worth about a farthing, a leather tobacco-pouch, half a dozen leaves of a Russian book, a wooden spoon, and a large piece of bread. *There* was plunder on the taking of a town by assault." The italics are the officer's own. He found two Russians alive in one room. "One of them was a Pole, and could talk a little German. He was all anxiety to hear how the town had been taken, and asked if the Allies had suffered much in the capture. When I told him the Russians had left it and we had walked in, he said they all expected to leave it soon; it was not worth keeping now, and we should not find much in it, or get much by it. I asked him how long he had been in the place, and he said, 'From the first.' He seemed to be highly proud of the defence; his face and manner showed it, and it struck me very forcibly that that feeling had been paramount in the mind of every Russian I saw in or about Sebastopol.

In the wounded it was clear enough, and the faces even of the dead betrayed it, as if it had been their last thought in connection with this world. . . . . By far the great majority were young men, from eighteen to about twenty-five years old, strong and sturdy in frame, heavy and meaningless in feature, but with a look of pride and satisfaction which in many was quite unmistakable. A great many had died with a smile on their lips—a smile of joy, which spoke of the pleasure with which they had defended their home, and of the success which, in their opinion, had attended their efforts. . . . . In evacuating Sebastopol the Russians left electric wires to explode mines in the town; one did not work, so next day nine men put off in a boat from the *Vladimir*, rowed back to Fort Paul, and fired the mine underneath the noses of the Allies. At a short distance from the shore the rowers rested on their oars. They had fired the mine of the fort, and had come into the very grasp of the foe to have a better view of the effect of the destruction. In a few moments up went the entire fort. The crash reverberated to the sky. The fort had done its duty for the Russians; it was not destined to take service against them." Speaking of the ikons left behind, and of the religious feeling of the Russians, the same officer says: "Everything connected with religion which was not valuable enough to be removed, had been spared, and one could not but reverence the feeling that left these simple relics unimpaired. The only large ikon I saw was, I believe, the property of General Wyndham. It was a three-quarter length, evidently a great man in the Greek church; but the face and form of the neck and shoulders bore as strong a resemblance to the late Duke of Wellington as if they had been painted from life." In connection with this curious resemblance, it is interesting to find that Kinglake, referring to Nicholas I., remarked: "It is known that his ideal of human greatness was the character of the Duke of Wellington."

With regard to the bravery of the women, we are told by the same officer that the intention had been, in the

earlier part of the siege, that if an assault were made and the outer defences carried, the women who had remained in the town—who were all of low class—should be employed in working Battery No. 17 on the highest point of the town, and they were actually instructed in the practice. "They appear," he says, "to have taken great delight in learning, and it was generally believed among the inhabitants that the women's battery would prove to be as effective with their novel weapons as any artifice of theirs is when directed against our sex alone." These simple remarks from an eye-witness, and from one of our own countrymen, give a more vivid picture than we could extract from a hundred pages of some dry historian, or from the written-for-a-purpose productions of the most conscientious of war correspondents. I make this my excuse for introducing them here. With regard to our part in the Crimean war, Kinglake is still considered, in spite of his many defects, to be the most interesting, and, at the same time, the most reliable authority. He greatly admired the pluck shown by the Russians. "Their defence of Sebastopol," he wrote, "ranges high in the annals of warfare, and I imagine that the more the truth is known, the more it will redound to the honour of the Russian arms."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RUSSIAN POMPEII.

Chersonese—Citizens' oath—Kingdom of the Bosphorus—Mithradates the Great—Milner's "Crimea"—Terra-cotta figurines—Euripides—Iphigenia—Gibbon's interpretation of the legend—Excavations—Remarkable skulls—Catacombs—Sarcophagi—Cupid and Psyche—Greeks and Romans—Shipwrecked Greeks—Ovid's report of a lecture—Opening a coffin—The Byzantine period—Where Vladimir was baptised—The Church of St. Vladimir—Alexander of Servia—Fresco paintings—Back to Sebastopol—German colonists.

ONE of our most interesting excursions in the neighbourhood of Sebastopol was a drive of three versts to the site of an ancient city, formerly known to Russian historians as Korsūn, but now called "Chersonese." It lies on a little peninsula, jutting westward into the Black Sea, which was called in olden days "The Tauric Chersonese," the word χερσονησος meaning a land-island. The first people known to have settled on this spot were some Greeks from Heraclea Pontica on the northern coast of Asia Minor, who had originally emigrated thither from Megara, on the isthmus of Corinth, and were consequently of Doric origin. The exact date of the foundation of Chersonese (I have adopted the Russian name) has not yet been discovered, but we know for a certainty that it was not later than the first half of the fifth century before Christ. The Greek colonists called it Heracleotic Cheronesus, after the parent city, and it soon became an important trading centre. To protect themselves from the wild tribes of the neighbourhood they built a stone wall with bastions round their town, and raised several forts outside it. The colonists seem to have devoted themselves mainly to agriculture, vine-growing and fishing.

The form of the government was democratic, and Chersonese became a sturdy little republic.* The citizens adhered rigidly to the laws and customs of their fatherland, and preserved the purity of their Doric dialect. This has been proved by the discovery of a block of marble which has inscribed upon it the oath which every citizen was obliged to take on entering manhood—an oath of allegiance to the Cheronese republic. We found the stone in the museum; it is in two pieces; the lower part was discovered in October, 1890, the upper in March, 1891, among the ruins of a basilica to the north of the new church of St. Vladimir. Part of the last line was wanting till 1897, when that also came to light. The whole, with the single exception of the thirty-fourth line, is clearly readable; the letters are deeply and beautifully chiselled on the marble, and have been well preserved. A copy of the inscription has been made by M. V. V. Laticheff, and published by him with a translation into Russian: it begins, "I swear before Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, the Maiden, the gods and goddesses and heroes who hold this town and country, etc." For the benefit of those who can read the original I shall give the inscription in full, copied word for word from M. Laticheff's pamphlet, published at Sebastopol in 1902:—

Ομνόω Δία Γᾶν Ἄλιον Παρθένον
[δ]εοὺς Ὀλυμπίους καὶ Ολυμπίας
[κ]αὶ ἥρωας ὅσοι πόλιν καὶ χώραν
καὶ τείχη ἔχοντι τὰ Χερσονασι-
τᾶν· ὁμονοησῶ ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας
καὶ ἐλευθερίας πόλεος καὶ πολι-
τᾶν καὶ οὐ προδωσῶ Χερσόνασον
οὐδὲ Κερκινῖτιν οὐδὲ Καλὸν λιμέ-
να οὐδὲ τἄλλα τείχη οὐδὲ τᾶς ἄλ-

*Smith, in his "Wealth of Nations," ascribes the rapid rise of the Greek colonies to two causes: (1) their being established in barbarous countries, and being surrounded by people ignorant of the arts of agriculture, in consequence of which they obtained as much land to cultivate as they chose, and (2) their being permitted by the mother country to make what colonial arrangements they pleased without any interference.

λας χώρας, ἂν Χερσονασῖται νέμονται ἢ ἐνέμοντο, οὐθενὶ οὐθὲν, οὔτε, Ἕλλανι οὔτε βαρβάρωι, ἀλλὰ διαφυλαξῶ τῶι δάμωι τῶι Χερσονασιτᾶν· οὐδὲ καταλυσῶ τὰν δαμοκρατίαν, οὐδὲ τῶι προδιδόντι καὶ καταλύοντι ἐπιτρεψῶ οὐδὲ συγκρυψῶ, ἀλλὰ ἐξαγγελῶ τοῖς δαμιοργοῖς τοῖς κατὰ πόλιν· καὶ πολέμιος ἐσσοῦμαι τῶ[ι] ἐπιβουλεύοντι καὶ προδιδόντι ἢ ἀφιστάντι Χερσόνασον ἢ Κερκινῖτιν ἢ Καλὸν λιμένα ἢ τὰ τείχη καὶ χώραν τὰν Χερσονασιτᾶν· καὶ δαμιοργησῶ καὶ βουλευσῶ τὰ ἄριστα καί δικαιότατα πόλει καὶ πολίταις καὶ τὸν ΣΑΣΤΗΡΑ τῶι δάμωι διαφυλαξῶ καὶ οὐκ ἐχφερομυθησῶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων οὐθὲν οὔτε ποτὶ Ἕλλανα οὔτε ποτὶ βα[ρ]βαρον, ὃ μέλλει τὰμ πόλιν βλάπτειν· οὐδὲ δωρεὰν δωσῶ οὐδὲ δεξοῦμα[ι] ἐπὶ βλάβαι πόλεος καὶ πολιτᾶν· οὐδὲ ἐπιβουλευσῶ ἄδικον πρᾶγμα οὐθενὶ οὐθὲν τῶμ πολιτᾶν τῶμ μὴ ἀφεστακότων, οὐδὲ τῶι ἐπιβουλεύο[ντι ἐπιτρεψῶ οὐδὲ συγκρυψῶ οὐθὲν οὐθε]νὶ, ἀλλ' εἰσαγγελ[ῶ] καὶ κρινῶ ψά[φωι] κατὰ τοὺς νόμους· οὐδὲ συνωμο[σί]αν συνομοῦμαι οὔτε κατὰ τοῦ κοιν[οῦ] τοῦ Χερσονασιτᾶν οὔτε κατὰ τῶμ [πο]λιτᾶν οὐδενὸς, ὃς μὴ ἀποδέδεικτ[αι π]ολέμιος τῶι δάμωι· εἰ δέ τινι συνώ[μο]σα καὶ εἶ τινι καταλέλαμμαι ὅρ[κωι ἢ ἐ]πευχᾶι, δι[α]λυσαμένωι μὲν ἄ[μειν]ον εἴη καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς, ἐμμ[έν]οντι δὲ τὰ ἐναντία· καὶ εἴ τινά κ[α σ]υνωμοσίαν αἴσ[θω]μα[ι] ἐοῦσαν [ἢ γιγ]νομέναν, ἐ[ξα]γγελῶ τοῖς δαμ[ιοργ]οῖς· οὐδὲ σῖτον ἀπο τοῦ πεδίου ἀ[πα]γώγιμον ἀποδωσοῦμαι οὐδὲ ἐξ(α)ξῶ ἄλλαι ἀπὸ τοῦ πεδίου, ἀλλ' [ἢ εἰς] Χερσόνασον. Ζεῦ καὶ Γᾶ καὶ Ἄλιε [καὶ] Παρθένε καὶ θεοὶ Ὀλύμπιοι, ἐμμένο[ν]τι μέμ μοι εὖ εἴη ἐν τούτοις καὶ αὐ[τῶι] καὶ γένει καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς, μὴ ἐμμέν[ον]τι δὲ κακῶς καὶ αὐτῶι καὶ γένει καὶ [τοῖς]

55 ἐμοῖς, καὶ μήτε γᾶ μοι μήτε θά[λασ]-
σα καρπὸν φέροι μήτε γυν[αῖκες εὐτε-
κ]νοῖεν μήτε. . . . . θανα. . .

Russian archæologists have not yet been able to ascertain the exact date of the above inscription, but from the style of the language and the orthography, they have concluded that, without doubt, it belongs to the first half of the third century before Christ, if not to the second half of the fourth. The Athenians laid great stress on the importance of vows of this sort; Lycurgus, the Athenian orator, alluded to them in one of his speeches as "a means of strengthening the democracy," and said that the man who had once pledged himself can neither hide himself nor escape from the retaliation of the gods; and that if he should prove false to his oath, misfortune would fall, not only upon him, but on all his relations as well. From the wording of the vow in question we see that every citizen was held directly responsible for the safety of his township, and from line thirty-five we learn that the republic had its own National Assembly, and that seats in it were gained by vote. M. Laticheff is of the opinion that there must have existed earlier and less complicated forms of this citizens' vow, and that this one is a modification, and perhaps an amplification, made to suit the need of a later generation.

The Greeks founded a number of colonies along the south coast of the Crimea, which, at first independent, were finally united under one king, and known as the Kingdom of the Bosphorus. A little before the commencement of the Christian era the Chersonese Republic fell under the power of Mithradates the Great, the most renowned of all the kings of the Bosphorus, and, conquered by Pompey, who was born in the same year as Cicero, it eventually became part of the Roman Empire.* A

* See Chapter XXVI. for further particulars relating to Mithradates and Pompey. Until the latter half of the nineteenth century English writers always wrote *Mithridates*, though the name is spelt *Mithradates* on the coins of his reign excavated at Kerch.

list of forty-five kings of the Bosphorus has been made out from coins discovered along the coast; these kings reigned from about 502 B.C. to A.D. 344. The kingdom varied considerably in its limits,* but in its palmiest days, those of Mithradates the Great, it controlled the whole of the Crimea with the territory of the Kuban to the Dnieper. The fifth sovereign, Leucon, a wise and powerful prince, mentioned in the oration of Demosthenes against Leptines, cultivated a close alliance with the mother country, and especially encouraged the Athenian trade by taking off all duties on exports and imports. The Athenians imported more corn from the Crimea than from all other places. Milner gives us some interesting particulars, and adds that the buckwheat of Kerch—precisely the same region—carried off the prize at the great exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. In the time of Leucon the soil is said to have been so productive that the earth barely grazed by the ploughshare would return to the husbandman thirtyfold. Corn, wool, furs, salted provisions, and sturgeons were exported. History does not mention the imports, but we can get an idea of what they were from the excavations. All the cut marbles, the terra-cotta statuettes, and the jewellery found in the tumuli must have been imported.

"The Russian Pompeii" is the name given by a local archæologist, Professor M. R. Engel, to his pamphlet on the recent excavations, published in 1903. We bought a copy of it in the museum, and hence the name given to this chapter. The museum stands in the midst of the excavations, and my firm conviction on approaching it was that it would sooner or later have to be pulled down to allow of excavations in the ground it now covers; all round and close to it the ground is hollow with excavations, which were begun in 1853. Part of the walls of the old town are now uncovered, and a number of churches belonging to the period of the Byzantine rule, and many objects and remains belonging to the days of ancient Greece.

* See Milner's "Crimea," 1855.

At the time of the separation of the Eastern from the Western Empire, Chersonese fell to the lot of Byzantium. In the year 988 the Russian prince Vladimir was baptised in that neighbourhood, and married to Anne, sister of the Byzantine Emperor. "A pagan of the north," wrote Gibbon, "Volodomir, great prince of Russia, aspired to the daughter of the Roman people, and his claim was enforced by the threats of war, the promise of conversion, and the offer of a powerful succour against a domestic rebel." In a humorous note the historian adds, "Volodomir and Anne are ranked among the saints of the Russian church. Yet we know his vices, and are ignorant of her virtues." Henry I. of France married a great grand-daughter of this same Anne.

The history of the Crimea can be traced back, though with many wide gaps, through twenty-four centuries. It was as important to Athens as Egypt became to Rome in the days of the Empire—a market for her produce, and a training-place for her sailors. The earliest barbarian inhabitants of the Crimea were the Cimmerians; little, however, is known of them, though the words Krim and Crimea are thought to be derived from their name. Guthrie, who during the latter years of the eighteenth century devoted much research to tracing the history of this people, was convinced that the Cimmerians, or Cimri, as the Romans called them, were the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Wales. Amongst other passages quoted by him is one from the famous Icelandic Chronicle, which says that Odin and his Goths came up from Asgarad (which is the ancient name for Azoff, or the Palus Mæotis). "It is clear," says Rawlinson, in his essay on the same subject, "that by Herodotus the term 'Cimmerian' is used distinctly in an ethnic sense; and the point to be considered is, who these Cimmerians were, and whether they can be identified with any still existing race. When these questions have been settled it will be interesting to trace the history and migrations of a people which has an antiquity of above twenty-five hundred years, and has spread

from the steppes of the Ukraine to the mountains of Wales." This writer does not think that Grote was correct in his conjecture that the Tauri were a remnant of the Cimmerians. It was at Chersonesus Taurica that Euripides placed the scene of his "Iphigenia in Tauris." Its plot is a story relating to the Tauri, at a period when those barbarians had temples at whose altars bloody rites were celebrated. The priestess was a maiden, and men were the victims offered—generally foreigners thrown by shipwreck on the shore. The most dreaded of these temples stood on a jutting headland of the south coast, afterwards called Cape Parthenium. "It was dedicated," wrote Milner, "to Diana Tauropolitana, whose image, according to Euripides, fell from heaven into its shrine. The same tale was repeated by the town clerk of Ephesus* in relation to the Ephesian Diana, five centuries after the age of the dramatist." Iphigenia, doomed to an untimely death by a father's vow, was saved from it by the interposition of Diana, and carried off to Taurus in order to preside over the sanguinary worship of the goddess. Her lament, "Now a stranger," is too well known to need quoting here. The bosom friends, Orestes and Pilades, plough the Euxine wave, commissioned to carry off the goddess to the land of the Athenian. They enter a narrow inlet on the fling of an enormous wave, approach the temple, are seen and caught by the people on the shore, and conducted to the priestess to be sacrificed. Iphigenia recognises her own brother in Orestes. The three plot together and contrive to escape, carrying off with them the statue of Diana. There is no doubt that Euripides' description of the coast is that of the Crimea, though written twenty-four centuries ago.†

* See Acts xix. 35.

† "The bloody sacrifices of Diana," wrote Gibbon, "the arrival of Orestes and Pilades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri, the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were in some degree reclaimed from their brutal manners by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian colonies which settled along the maritime coast."

The land-locked inlet he describes is that of Balaclava. What English schoolboy, I wonder, labouring over his Euripides, ever dreams that the scene of "Iphigenia" is laid in Russia, and that the "Charge of the Light Brigade" took place within a mile of the spot where Orestes found his sister? Had Lord Raglan but known that the very inlet so well described by the Greek poet was really in existence in 1854, we may surely surmise that he would have landed there in the first place, that the battle of the Alma would never have been fought, and that our men would have been spared their weary march from one side of Sebastopol to the other—a march which wasted their time and strength, and gave the enemy time to prepare for an eleven months' siege.

Near the western wall of the monasterial cemetery, close to the cliffs overhanging the Black Sea, were discovered, in 1893, the remains of a large basilica. Two small chapels were discovered on its southern side; the pavement is of marble slabs, two of which are covered with Greek inscriptions referring to the political duties of the citizens. Parts of a cornice have also turned up, and where the altar must have stood there was found a stone box with a movable stone lid. A handsome marble sarcophagus was discovered near the spot in 1891; it closely resembles that of Yaroslav in St. Sophia's at Kieff, and the box in question was also, in all probability, a stone coffin. It is thought that this basilica may have been transformed by the Byzantine Christians into a church about the middle of the fourteenth century. The people dwelling in the neighbourhood were practically barbarians, and Chersonese was then serving as a place of banishment from the civilised world. The Turks had long before carried across the sea many of the marble columns and decorations of the old Greek temples. In later days the poverty-stricken inhabitants were ever willing to sell every stick and stone that they could turn into money, in order to provide themselves with bread to eat. The columns of the basilica have been proved to be of Balaclava marble,

and people are beginning to enquire how it has come about that Balaclava marble is to-day considered useless for building purposes. On the south side of the farthest chapel is a little passage which separates if from a building with a basement containing a brick stove, and a terrace, which shows signs of having been paved with marble slabs. In the floor of the basement there have been found some six hundred pieces of money, among which were a hundred and ninety two bronze coins bearing the impression of the Emperor Romanus I., and coined specially for Chersonese. This and similar finds have led to the supposition that at one time or another the people of the place must have fled for dear life without stopping to fetch away their money. In the passage above alluded to are two pear-shaped cisterns, hewn out of the rock, about ten feet deep; one of these has a well-built brick floor. Near them, by the stone canal, was found a hen's nest with six eggs, of which three had been broken by falling earth, and two smashed to atoms; one was quite whole, with a dried-up yolk loose inside it; some careless housewife must have failed to discover where her hen had made its nest. The eggs were placed among the other treasures in the little museum, and have aroused far more interest in the breasts of Russian tourists than the "citizens' oath" has ever been able to evoke. Archæologists, like other human beings, appreciate the sympathetic interest of their fellows, and M. Kostushko, touched by the effect the eggs had produced upon visitors to his museum, has now arranged them, along with all the bits of bread and other edible remains, in a separate glass case, which he gravely calls the "archæological buffet," and, indeed, as he has himself remarked, the blackened grains of millet do look something like caviare. In the chapels near the basilica there have been picked up three thousand fragments of glass mosaic, coloured and gilded; and in another spot minute gilded fragments, to the number of four hundred, have been collected; these have also been carefully arranged in a glass case.

The museum is full of interesting relics that have been dug up on the spot. We found there amulets, carved ivory pocket-combs made to shut up like a penknife, miniature bronze idols, representing men with their hair done in a long plait; beautifully formed women's heads in terra-cotta; statuettes in soft stone; elegantly shaped vases of clay; handles of amphoras, bearing the monogram of the makers, seven enormous terra-cotta wine jars seven feet in diameter; huge pieces of the pipes used by the ancients to drain refuse from the town into the bay; tear bottles; burial urns; bracelets; Greek lamps, and finally, skulls. In one case we found several skulls of extraordinary form, which had been dug up in 1904—only a month or two before our visit—they were evidently the skulls of persons who had had their heads scientifically deformed, and lengthened out behind like a pumpkin, by means of bandages in early childhood, in a similar way to that in which the feet of little girls are treated in China. One of these, according to the label attached to it, had been found without a coffin, in a burial heap; it is thought to be that of an ancient Goth. There were also many remnants of marble temples, showing that the Greek love of the beautiful had come with the colonists to Chersonese. We saw also gold coins, gold rings and silver bracelets. Several catacombs have been discovered; in one of them was a small chapel, with a mosaic floor; in another, a stone sarcophagus bearing the name of the person buried in it, written in Greek, and among a heap of cremated bones were found a silver brooch, a golden plate on which was depicted a battle scene, several bits of gold leaf and some glass beads. The funeral urns that fill several shelves in the museum came mostly from these catacombs; they are full of cremated bones mixed up with bits of gold leaf, and little pitchers ornamented with designs of battles, birds and foliage. One of the coffins was found to contain a skeleton with a bronze coin placed between its teeth; the deceased's friends had evidently thought it well that he should have the money ready for Charon when he

rowed him across the river. Several of the more recently excavated catacombs contained skeletons laid one above the other, and with them a great many ear-rings, trinkets and rings, with stones on which were artistic representations of women, birds, dogs, etc. In one catacomb there was found a stone coffin with the skeletons of two little girls, and, besides the usual trinkets, a set of draughtsmen—fifteen white, and fifteen black. It seems to have been the custom to place the toys of a deceased child with it in its coffin, for quite a number of little sarcophagi have turned up in this Russian Pompeii in which all sorts of objects, such as children would be likely to play with, have been found—shells, small knives, little spoons, and bones fashioned into miniature tools, or musical instruments. Among them were also a number of large bronze coins, of the reigns of Nero, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. In one of the larger sarcophagi there was found a beautiful little terra-cotta statuette of Cupid and Psyche, emblematic, perhaps, of the happy life led by an exemplary married couple; or, what is more likely, of the mutual love of some young pair of lovers who met with an early death; such, at any rate, are the ideas that presented themselves to the mind of the Russian excavator, as he tenderly cleared the exquisite little work of art from the mortal dust in which it had lain for so many centuries. Those coffins which did not contain bones and trinkets bore unmistakable traces of having been plundered—we know not of what priceless treasures. One race of men succeeded another here as the centuries rolled on, and Latins may have plundered the tombs of Greeks, or Scythians the tombs of Latins, or Tatars the tombs of both; we cannot tell. Even when the Byzantine Christians had possession of the spot there may have been wolves among them in sheep's clothing—it is more than surmised that the Christians occasionally emptied the heathen bones from the sarcophagi in order to refill them with the remains of followers of the true religion, and that in doing so they were not squeamish about appro-

priating the valuables. On a stone coffin found less than three feet below the surface of the soil there was a thin marble slab covered with both Greek and Latin inscriptions; much of the writing has become unreadable, but enough can be made out to show that it is a curious bit of correspondence, between the citizens of Chersonese and some Roman settlers, about the infringement of a rule regarding the taxation of private houses.

In 1902 there were brought to light the remains of a church with frescoes on its walls, a baptismal font, and a mosaic floor. In the opinion of the well-known academician, M. Kondakoff, this church dates from the fifth century of the Christian era. Underneath it is an interesting catacomb, which seems to have been used as the last resting-place of some Byzantine bishop. One sees there a trough filled with pure water from a spring in the catacomb, and a number of family vaults and stone coffins, belonging to the Roman epoch. A larger Christian catacomb has also been found close to the church.

In wandering among the excavations one finds, not simply a Pompeii, but a Pompeii built upon the ruins of a town as ancient as Troy, and covered, in its turn, with a Byzantine city of the early Christian era. The present port of Sebastopol, the Sinus Portuosus of Pomponius Mela, was once the principal port of Chersonese according to all appearances, for that of Balaclava must have been far too small to serve as a trading port for a large and flourishing city. We read that the port of Sebastopol was at one time frequented by people of so many different nations that the Romans had to keep a hundred and twenty-five interpreters there to facilitate its mighty commerce. The little peninsula is shaped like a ram's head, hence the name of Criu Metophon given to it by the ancients. The Russians annexed it in 1783. Their picturesque monastery of St. George, which dates from the tenth century, was at one time supposed to stand on the very ledge of the rock upon which the Tauri raised their

temple to Diana. Pallas, the naturalist, whom Catherine II. banished to the Crimea as a reward for his enthusiastic "Crimean Sketch Book," explored the whole coast carefully, and came to the conclusion that the cape nearest to the site of the old city answered more exactly to Strabo's description of the Parthenium, and even thought he had discovered the steps on the rock leading up to the temple. The excavators are quite sure, however, that Pallas was mistaken, and have fixed on yet another likely spot. Herodotus, in his fourth book, Melpomene, says that the Tauri, before precipitating the bodies of the shipwrecked Greeks into the sea from the rock on which Diana's temple stood, used to cut off their heads, place them on poles, and stick them on the tops of their houses as a charm against their enemies. Sir William Jones, the Sanscrit scholar, thought that Calé, the wife of Siva (the Stygian Jove of India), was the Stygian, or Tauric Diana of the Greeks and Romans, otherwise called Hecati, and often confounded with Proserpine. Ovid has left us a description of Diana's temple in a letter he wrote to a friend at Rome, from the place of his banishment, near the mouth of the Danube. One of the citizens of Tomé, where Ovid was residing, gave a description of Diana's temple in a public lecture at which the poet was present. He was himself a native of the Chersonese Taurica, and had seen this temple standing on columns with forty steps leading up to it. Ovid heard him say that the altar of the goddess, originally of white marble, was so stained with the blood of her victims that it looked quite black. Here is part of Ovid's report of the lecturer's words:—

"Est locus in Scythia, Tauros dixere priores,
Qui Getica longe non ita distat humo.
Hac ego sum terra—patriæ nec pœnitet—ortus;
Consortem Phœbi gens colit illa deam.
Templa manent hodie vastis innixa columnis,
Perque quater denos itur in illa gradus.
Fama refert illic signum cæleste fuisse:
Quoque minus dubites, stat basis orba dea:
Araque, quæ fuerat natura candida saxi,
Decolor adfuso tincta cruore rubet.

"Femina sacra facit tædæ, non nota jugali,
Quæ superat Scythicas nobilitate nurus.
Sacrifici genus est, sic instituere priores,
Advena virgineo cæsus ut ense cadat.
Regna Thoans habuit Mæotide clarus in ora,
Nec fuit Euxinis notior alter aquis.
Sceptra tenente illo liquidas fecisse per auras
Nescio quam dicunt Iphigenian iter,
Quam levibus ventis sub nube per aëra vectam
Creditur his Phœbe deposuisse locis."

I omit a poetical account of the meeting of Orestes and Iphigenia, and the conversation that took place between the brother and sister and the faithful Pylades.

"Nec mora, de templo rapiunt simulacra Dianæ,
Clamque per inmensas puppi feruntur aquas
Mirus amor juvenum, quamvis abiere tot anni,
In Scythia magnum nunc quoque nomen habet."

Then the poet adds a few more words of his own, about the effect that this touching story had on the barbarians:—

"Fabula narrata est postquam vulgaris ab illo
Laudarunt omnes facta piamque fidem.
Scilicet hac etiam, qua nulla ferocior ora est,
Nomen amicitiæ barbara corda movet."

Those of my readers who wish to read Ovid's letter in full can find it by turning to his *Ex Ponto*. They will not find it among his *Tristia*, as previous writers have erroneously asserted.

When brighter days dawn for Russia, and when the archæologists have plenty of money to spend upon their excavations, we shall not be surprised to hear that they have discovered some, at least, of the fragments of Diana's temple; they have for years been throwing heart and soul into the work, and are continually coming across trophies of the greatest historical value.

Among recent discoveries in the ancient necropolis at Chersonese I may mention a two-handled clay vessel which had evidently been made to serve as a funeral urn, for it was full of ashes; its sides were ornamented with interesting figures of men and animals, executed upon a

background of black lacquer. In a stone coffin near it were found three golden plates with exquisitely embossed representations of a griffin, and two female figures with wings. Twenty-five sarcophagi, laid in vaults paved with large tiles, contained each a plate covered with black lacquer and scrawled over with names and initials; also a curious sort of leaden tassel with a hook to it. A number of tourists were one day strolling among the excavations, when the moment came for opening a stone sarcophagus which showed signs of being exceptionally well preserved, the lime between the slabs of stone not having even begun to crumble. Professor Engel tells us in his pamphlet how the awestruck tourists clustering round gave a touch of solemnity to the scene, and how M. Kostushko exclaimed, when the lid had been raised, "Why! such a sight as this is hardly to be seen in a lifetime!" There lay the skeleton of a woman decked out in all her jewellery. It lay on its back with outstretched hands; the eyes were closed with golden plates, cut like large spectacles, with representations of the pupils of the eyes, and of the eyelashes; the mouth was covered with an oval leaf of gold, which had been moulded to the form of the tightly compressed lips; on each side of the skull was a disc-shaped ear-ring; one of them with a central ornament of blue glass and a golden pendant of pyramidal form. With them was a silver hair-pin of rough workmanship, to which was attached, by a small chain, a silver plate in the form of a heart. Twenty-six beads of jet and amber lay scattered round the neck; on the left wrist was a thin silver bracelet, and on the first finger of that hand was a massive gold ring, also of rough workmanship. Of the vessels usually found in the coffins there was only one, a large round glass bottle with a short neck. The wooden coffin had rotted away, but the iron nail which fastened the lid, and the plank which strengthened it, still lay in their places, but in an almost vertical position.

Altogether there were seven catacombs opened in 1903, six sarcophagi taken from tombs in the rock, four

others found in stone-lined tombs, twenty-five in tiled tombs, sixty-one in earthen tombs lined with small stones, two stone coffins, two urns filled with ashes, six urns of red clay, one of red clay covered with black lacquer, six rings, thirty-two ear-rings, thirty-one gold and silver plates attached to the clothing on the skeletons, fifteen pieces of gold leaf for closing the eyes and mouth, two ornamental hair-pins, and, besides coins, a number of less important objects that I cannot stop to enumerate. The coins of the period when the Greek colony was under the subjection of Rome are in a wonderfully good condition. Amongst these may be mentioned one with a bust of Septimus Severus and another with that of Caracalla.

The excavations which result in the discovery of objects dating from the time of the Greek colonies will perhaps prove more attractive to English tourists than those relating to the Byzantine period, but the latter are without doubt of exceptional interest to Russians; for they throw light upon the most obscure period in the history of the Greek church,—that which begins with the seventh and ends with the thirteenth century.

So difficult was it for the archæologists to determine the exact spot upon which the baptism of their first Christian prince took place that Nicholas I. almost decided to build the new church in Sebastopol: he changed his mind, however, and eventually commanded that it should be erected at Chersonese.

In the year 1898 His Imperial Majesty Nicholas II. visited the excavations at Chersonese, with the result that the budget of the excavators was thereafter increased by the grant of an annual sum of two thousand roubles. M. Kostushko has been enabled with this help to continue the excavation of the ancient and gigantic walls of the old city, which in themselves are a nine days' wonder to architects, with their strong foundations on a level with the sea, and their massive gateways. In 1902 Nicholas II. again visited the spot, and on this occasion he was photographed while contemplating the wonderful

old walls, and the photograph appeared in due course in M. Engel's pamphlet. The Emperor also visited the new church of St. Vladimir, which stands with its monastic buildings on the site of the public square of the ancient city, and covers, I fear, many interesting remains, perhaps even those of Diana's temple.

When we visited the church of St. Vladimir, a monk acted as our guide and showed us round. He showed first the foundation walls of the early Christian church, where Russian tourists believe Vladimir to have been baptised: these walls are thirty-eight inches thick, and rise to the height of three feet; they have been covered, for preservation, with slabs of white marble. The new church was completed just fifteen years ago; the interior of the large dome is painted to represent the blue sky, with cherubs floating about in it. The picture round the dome represents the baptism of Christ by John, and was painted by Korsuschin. The church has a handsome mosaic floor. The little chapel to the right has a half dome behind its altar, on which is painted a striking picture of the Creator with arms outstretched—the kind of picture that one finds only in the Greek church, for it offends the taste of both Catholics and Protestants. It is the representation of a fine old man dressed in a loose garment of pale green, over another of lavender tint with flowing sleeves. The monk opened a small round window in the wall to show us the lovely view of the turquoise sea, with Sebastopol stretching away in the distance. One could see all the curves of the little bay, which comes close up to the church, and the ruins of the Genoese fortress near it. We turned reluctantly from the view to admire the altar of Carrara marble, built in the purest Byzantine style, and the fresco pictures of the Last Supper, in which the heads of the apostles are larger than life, upon a background of gold. Judas, whose face is very dark, is represented as rising from the table and about to go away. We were shown a curious box of relics, mostly bones of saints, arranged in order, with their names attached, like

a collection of shells. The sides of the box were covered with glass, through which we could admire the inlaid covering of Russian enamel representing the Crucifixion. We were requested on leaving to sign our names in a new visitors' book; the first book to be placed there had been a long time getting filled up, for on one of its earlier pages we read the name of Natalie of Servia, and that of her son, the unfortunate Alexander, written in a childish hand beneath his mother's. The date of their visit was 28th May, 1887. The book had been placed there in 1875. As I took down the date the monk was shocked at the state of the blotting-paper I carried in my note-book, and insisted on supplying me with a new piece. He took great pride in the church, and was anxious that we should appreciate sufficiently its fine fresco paintings.

As we drove back to our hotel in Sebastopol, through the street that was named after Catherine II., we counted, in the space of two minutes, more than fifty pictures of clocks displayed over the doors of innumerable horological shops on either side of the thoroughfare. The horologists* of South Russia are almost invariably the sons of German settlers. Time does not exist for the true Russian. The Germans of Sebastopol have practically become Russian by adopting the Orthodox faith: I have mentioned elsewhere that there are not enough Germans of the Lutheran faith in that town to keep a pastor there. An English visitor to the colonies of Friedenthal, Neusatz and Rosenthal, which are not far from Simpheropol, remarked, in 1855, that among them one might suppose oneself on the banks of the Rhine.† The colonists' houses are of stone, with neat little gardens round them, and have an air of comfort which is very pleasing; they keep large herds of cattle, and supply the towns with dairy produce, just as they do in the neighbourhood of Novgorod. "They cultivate potatoes to such an extent," wrote the above quoted traveller, "that it is proverbial for German colonists

* The shoemakers and blacksmiths are also Germans. † Mrs. Neilson.

and potatoes to be associated together." For a long time the Tatars would not cultivate potatoes for themselves, but were very clever at stealing them out of the ground in the night, and leaving the green stalks untouched, in such a way that the theft was not discovered till the leaves began to wither.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BALACLAVA.

Crimean veterans—Anecdotes—The Crimean shawl—Nelson—Balaclava in 1796—A reel in a bottle—First railway in Russia—English navvies—Sufferings of English soldiers—Turkish methods—English and French camp systems—French musicians—Usefulness of music—Scarlett's three hundred—Proposed sanatorium at Balaclava—Crimean weather—The *Times* correspondent—The prosaic present—Mud baths—The battle of Balaclava—"See what we French have done for you."

THERE are not many people living to-day who took active part in the Crimean war, but a few of them are hale and hearty yet; one or two received the K.C.B. when King Edward came to the throne. Among these was a naval officer who, in his great modesty, had actually forgotten that he deserved a reward; he awoke one morning, like Byron, to find himself famous, that is to say—to find himself made a K.C.B. for his services forty years back. He is now in his eighty-fifth year, and yet he remembers much of those days. He was in the *Agamemnon* when she took part in the bombardment of Sebastopol, and he tells with a smile how a little midshipman ran up to him crying, "Oh! I've had my stomach shot away!" "Come, it's not so bad as that," replied the future K.C.B., and taking off the boy's jacket he proved to him that it was only his sleeve that had been grazed. The boy took the jacket, folded it up carefully, and replied, "Well, I shall make something out of *this* when I get home!"

On another occasion, when searching the battlefield for wounded English, he came across a cavalry officer, lying on the ground with his head blown off, and by his

side, standing patiently on three legs, his poor horse, whose fourth leg was gone. "The sight of that horse," says the veteran, "touched me even more than the sight of his dead master had done."

When the ladies of England sent shawls, hug-me-tights, mufflers and cuffs to the English soldiers, a plaid shawl fell to the lot of this officer. He brought it home with him as a trophy, and when his little nephews and nieces came to stay with him, they struggled and kicked for the privilege of sleeping under the Crimean shawl, and sometimes their aunt was obliged to say: "Now, children, if there is any noise or quarrelling, I shall not let you take it in turn to sleep under the Crimean shawl." That threat never failed. The children are all grown up now, but they have not forgotten how they thrilled with pride, and how their hearts beat with exultation when they were allowed to sleep under the Crimean shawl. "We felt," said one of them to me, "as if we had been to the Crimea and taken part in the war when we were tucked snugly under that shawl." And now, in winter, when the veteran feels chilly, he remembers the old days, and draws over his knees the same dear old shawl. One more story about him. He used to let the aforesaid nephews and nieces dress up in his naval uniform, cocked hat, sword, medals and all. They took it in turn, like the shawl, and one day it was the turn of the youngest—a tiny boy of four. The cocked hat nearly hid his little face from view, and the coat-tails had to be well pinned up before he could move; as for the sword, it was almost more than he could manage. The children trotted out into the garden, and, quite unmindful of the crowd that soon began to gather together outside the railings, went in procession up and down the paths to their hearts' content. Their uncle, who happened to be returning home from the town while this was going on, noticed a large crowd gathered round his garden, and thinking that the house must be on fire, hurried up to the spot in great anxiety, looked over the heads of the crowd, and saw his four-year-old nephew strutting about

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The Monastery of St. George, Sebastopol.

Balaclava.

[*To face page* 305.

in full naval uniform, the sword in his tiny grasp and his breast covered with medals. A sailor, who happened to be one of the crowd (it was at Greenwich), turned to him and said, "Why, sir, it's just like Lord Nelson himself—with the chill off."

Balaclava, the Urbs Climatum of Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, and the Portus Symbolon of Strabo, was described by a lady who saw it in 1793 as one of the most curious and snug little basins in the world, with a mouth like the entrance to a cave. When the British soldiers were perishing in the trenches for want of food and warm clothing, Lord Lyons* brought his great ship, the *Agamemnon*, in at the little opening, laden with supplies from England, and the soldiers' hearts were glad at the sight of it. One of the officers wrote home that the sight of that ship was like the puzzle of a reel in a bottle on a magnificent scale, and it seemed incredible that the *Agamemnon* would ever get out again. The greatest width of the bay is only four hundred yards. When the English came to Balaclava they found a Greek colony there. These Greeks had originally come as smugglers, but on their assisting Catherine II. against the Turks, they had been rewarded by permission to settle down and form a self-governing colony. There is now a flourishing little fishing town, with two thousand four hundred souls, close to the tiny harbour, and quite a respectable inn, at which travellers can stay. In the summer of 1903 more than two thousand Russian tourists signed their names in the visitors' book. It was at Balaclava that the English put down the first bit of railway ever built in Russia.† Eighteen hundred tons of rails, six thousand sleepers, six hundred loads of timber, three thousand tons of engines, cranes, trucks, waggons, barrows, and such like, were transported from London to Balaclava. With them went five hundred navvies, in parties of fifty and eighty; they

* Lord Lyons was the maternal grandfather of the present Duke of Norfolk.

† The first bit of railway laid down by the Russians is that which connects Tsarskoi Selo with St. Petersburg.

took with them huts, coals, firewood, and a portable cooking-stove to each party of ten, so constructed as to admit of boiling, baking, and frying in the open air. A surgeon, with four assistant surgeons, and four nurses, accompanied the party; also two missionaries,* to look after their spiritual wants. The railroad they laid relieved the troops and horses of a toil that was killing them, and the laying of the rails occupied no more time than it would have taken to make a road. Of course, the English pulled it all up again when they had done with it, but the road the poor tired soldiers had made is there still, and forms part of the carriage drive from Sebastopol to Yalta. From the diaries of the officers we learn that the want of wood was the severest that our soldiers suffered from during that terrible month of November. Their tents were blown down by the wind and the rain, and the hospital tents went first, because they were the highest. The Turkish soldiers,† however, dug themselves trenches about twelve feet long, eight wide, and four deep. Then they set up a row of forked poles along the middle, and laid ridge poles across them from the bank on either side. These they covered thickly with branches, and mud was then plastered over the whole, excluding the air. The slope of the roof enabled it to resist several hours of rain. A sloping path led down to the door, but no provision was made for a draught or light. The one idea in the mind of the Turks seemed to be to keep warm and dry, and so well did they succeed, that their snug retreats soon became the envy of those under canvas. The French soldiers seem to have been in every respect better equipped than the English, but they, too, had a good deal to bear. Here is one point of difference that was observed between the respective camp systems of the English and the French. "The members of our bands," wrote a non-combatant,‡ "are devoted to bearing stretchers; the French musicians, on the contrary, are at this moment

* See Milner's "Crimea."

† See Lieut.-Col. Bruce Hanley's account.

‡ See "A Month in the Camp before Sebastopol."

playing 'Rule Britannia,' in compliment of the *entente cordiale*, and many a poor sick Briton is, I dare say, raising himself on his elbow to catch the faint but cheering strains as they float to our lines. Our allies argue that camp is the very place where music is wanted; that a soldier can carry a stretcher into action as well as an accomplished musician, but that if both get knocked on the head, a month's training will replace the one and not the other. They add, that if the musician alone will serve our turn, it would be well that he should at any rate play during the days and weeks that happily intervene between bloody engagements in the most active warfare."

It is not without interest in these days of wars and rumours of wars to remember that in the four weeks after the British army landed in the Crimea its effective strength had been reduced by seven thousand. We lost two thousand at the battle of the Alma, and five thousand by disease; nearly a third of the total force. Speaking of the English sailors, the last-mentioned writer observes, "There is but one martial duty with which they cannot be trusted, and that is to guard the casks of ration rum; the spirit invariably vanishes under their care." And some facetious person remarked during the siege that if only our sailors knew that there was a keg of brandy on the other side of Sebastopol, they would get through somehow.

We drove across the valley to the spot where Scarlett's three hundred charged up the hill-side:—

"'Lost one and all' were the words
Muttered in our dismay;
But they rode like Victors and Lords
Thro' the forest of lances and swords
In the heart of the Russian hordes,
They rode, or they stood at bay—
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray—
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
In the wave of a stormy day;

Till suddenly shock upon shock
Staggered the mass from without,
Drove it in wild dis-array,
For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a shout,
And the foeman surged, and wavered and reel'd.
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,
And over the brow and away."

At one point, not far from this spot, the eye catches a glimpse of the sapphire bay; at another, nestled among trees on the brow of a hill, gleam the white stones that mark the Italian cemetery. A little further on, among the vineyards, is the cemetery where the Sardinian soldiers were laid to rest. And where we stand, in the flat valley—the carriage road shines like a white serpent among the brown grass. The air in the valley is so fresh and beautiful in the bright sunshine of early autumn, that one feels in no haste to leave it, and time is a forgotten thing. Russian medical men propose to erect a sanatorium in this lovely spot, but I fancy that it will always be empty in the month of November. The proprietor of one hotel in Sebastopol assured me that one could tell with precision what weather each month would bring. The storm which wrecked the *Prince* comes every year almost as regularly as a birthday, and no one is ever quite prepared for it. After that storm has swept away the Crimean summer, the weather remains cold and wintry till the end of December; then comes a delightful January, spring-like in the balminess of its gentle zephyrs from over the sea. February is winter again; you draw your fur-lined jacket closer round you, and never venture out without your galoshes and umbrella. March and April are friendly months; they bring warm sunshine and a cloudless blue sky, and sometimes they bring—over the waveless surface of the calm sea—an English yacht or two, to anchor in the little harbour of Yalta. The *haute saison*, however, of the Russian Riviera is from the middle of August to the first November storm, and woe to the visitors who linger on that lovely coast one day too long.

The thick walls of the old Genoese fortress by the

Balaclava Bay, dating from the year 1476, could tell us many things. They saw the first railway laid in Russia, they saw our soldiers dying of fatigue in the trenches,* they saw the vigils of the English nurses who had come three thousand miles across the sea to tend the sick and wounded, and many of whom were to find their last resting-place in that valley. They saw the *Times* correspondent writing in his tent the notes which, published quickly in the *Times*, were to tell the Russians just where we placed our powder, and exactly where our weakest spot might be found; and warn our enemy of each mediatted attack.† They saw the sentry walking up and down before Lord Raglan's tent, not spruce and fine, but a ragged, ill-fed ghost, the leather of whose boots had the colour of a rusty nail. They saw our officers looking anxiously into the besieged town, and distinguishing through their field-glasses the new barricades that rose in the night like magic, under the direction of Todleben.

But let us return to the prosaic present; on the opposite side of the bay there rises a more modern pile, a factory for preserving, in bottles and tins, the fish that is caught in the bay by the Balaclava fishermen. Near it are a number of cottages, inhabited in summer time by quiet-minded Russians undergoing the grape cure, who do not wish to get engulfed in the stream of fashion that pours into the larger places on the coast; here they can indulge in simple living and delightful sea bathing. The water of the bay is pure and transparent. You can see the sand‡ through many feet of clear water—and there is no danger of crabs. The mud of Balaclava has long been known to possess medicinal properties, and when the great sanatorium is built, mud baths and the

* "Whole regiments melted away in those ditches," wrote an eye-witness.

† See Kinglake's "Invasion of the Crimea."

‡ Dr. Clarke, who visited Balaclava in 1809, wrote: "The shore is covered with fine glittering sand, making the most beautiful writing-sand that can be used; when scattered over fresh writing it produces an effect as if the ink had been covered with minute scales of polished gold."

grape cure will be among its chief attractions. At present, those who wish to indulge in them have the mud brought to their cottages, and enjoy their baths at very little expense. The land is being bought up rapidly, and a more pretending private villa at Balaclava is already in the mind's eye of many a thriving Moscow or Petersburg merchant, who wishes to shelter wife and children from the cruel winds of the north during the early autumn months. How hard to believe that this valley is the spot where the English built, in 1854–56, "a little England," where they had their factories, their railway, their telegraph, and their storehouses, and where they have left but a single monument to mark the graves of their dead. The pyramidal stone, raised upon three steps, was placed there in 1855, and rebuilt in 1875, and upon it we read, in English and in Russian, the words, "In memory of those who fell in the battle of Balaclava on October 13th, 1855."

In those exciting days, when "a little England" was rising at Balaclava, the French contingent, in their "little France" on the Kamische Bay, were equally active, equally brave, and far more self-satisfied. On one occasion, when a Russian fort was burning, as a result of the combined action of the Allies, a Frenchman ran up to one of our officers, who is still living, and, pointing to the fortress, cried exultingly, "See what we French have done for you!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RUSSIAN RIVIERA.

From Sebastopol to Yalta—Changing scenery—The Italy of Russia—The valley of Baidar—Warmest spot in the Crimea—Watering the horses—The Baidar Gateway—Sunrise—Russian taste—Like the Dolomites—Earthquakes—Tatar huts—Tatar carts—A "Little Versailles"—Cimiez—Aloupka—The Crimean Alhambra—A Russian wife for an English peer—Aloupka compared with Nervi—Death traps—Delicate children—Fleecing visitors—Marble lions—Yalta—Our hotel—An incident—Russians at home—The governor's wife—Paris dresses—Playing at simplicity—Variegated cauliflowers—Natives of Yalta—Livadia—The Empress at home—Beauty of the sky—Orianda—The two Massandras—Refreshments for tourists—Increase in the number of visitors—The Botanical Gardens at Nikita—Magaratch—Crimean wines—Vine growing—Walnuts—Gourzûf—The "Seven hotels"—Sea bathing—Poushkin's tree—Aloushta—Its climate—The grape cure—Archæological remains—Fast driving—Off to Odessa.

THERE is a splendid carriage road the whole way from Sebastopol to Yalta, and if you have three good horses and no luggage you can accomplish this journey in twelve hours. We did it in fourteen. A comfortable steamer takes passengers across in five hours when the weather is good, but all who wish for an enchanting first impression of that magnificent coast should drive. Were I a German or an American, I should class the drive in question as "a world-drive." It deserves the epithet quite as much as the Sistine Madonna deserves to be called "a world-picture." Russia has only one other drive that can be mentioned in the same breath—the drive through the Darial Pass in the Caucasus. We packed our two selves and some luggage into a comfortable chaise with three horses, and by seven o'clock on a glorious October morning we had left the streets of the

august city—for that is the meaning of the word Sebastopol—behind us, and were once more approaching the Balaclava valley. For about three miles there was nothing on either side of us but treeless and herbless land; bare, brown and slightly undulating, with a cloudless blue sky above. We knew that before nightfall we should have passed through some of the most exquisite scenery in Russia, and were getting impatient to know where it would begin. Another half mile was traversed, and then, almost suddenly, the undulations became hills, but still remained bare and brown as ever. The summits of the hills rose higher and higher as we proceeded, till they were replaced at last by rugged crags and real mountain peaks: these were the outposts of that magnificent mountain range which fringes the southern coast, and runs parallel with the sea through almost the whole breadth of the peninsula.

No one who has only seen the northern and central parts of the Crimea can form the slightest idea of the beauty and grandeur of its southern shores. The difference is that of night from day. All along the shore the rocky sides of mountain peaks slope grandly down to the water's edge, and form a sheltered riviera, which has often been called "the Italy of Russia." A good carriage road has been constructed along the side of this mountain range as far as Aloushta. Before reaching this riviera our carriage had to descend into, and cross through, a lovely valley, surrounded on all sides by high hills. This was the valley of Baidar, the arcadia over whose beauties so many travellers have given way to ecstatic rapture. Our road descended the hill-side between thick woods of oak, and coiled, snake-like, among the verdure which had come at last, down to the fertile valley below, where a Tatar village gleamed like a speck in the distance. The valley was much broader than it had looked from above, and we were a long time reaching the village in its centre. When at length we drove through it we noticed, besides the cottages, a pretty Russian cottage hospital, with all its windows thrown open to let in the balmy sunny air. The valley of Baidar has the

name for being the warmest and most sheltered spot in the whole of the Crimea, and the fertility of its soil is said to be extraordinary. At present the greater part of it is the private property of the descendants of Admiral Mordvinoff, who did so much for the Crimea towards the close of the eighteenth century, and whose high position was taken from him because a powder magazine happened to blow up several miles from where he was living. After we had crossed the valley our carriage began to climb again. The road became pleasantly shady with overhanging trees, but the day was wearing on, and the climb was hot work for our horses. Up and up we climbed till we reached a mountain spring, gushing from a well-shaded mossy bank on the road side; here the horses stopped to drink. The road was so steep that stones had to be placed behind the wheels to prevent our carriage from slipping backwards while the horses were being watered. Then on we went again, still ascending, till we reached the so-called Baidar Gateway—a handsome stone arch which marked the highest spot reached by the road, which runs at this point over a mountain pass 1,631 feet above sea level, with towering peaks on either side. We drove through the gateway and looked out suddenly upon a beautiful semi-circular valley stretching far below us down to the blue sea opposite, the blue sea which had been shut out of view ever since we left Balaclava behind us. Thousands of Russian tourists journey every summer to the Baidar Gateway and sleep the night at one of the two primitive inns there, in order that they may enjoy the magnificent spectacle of the sun rising in purple and gold above the horizon of the tideless sea, while the luxuriant valley at their feet is still wet with the night's dew. Nowhere else on the riviera can the sunrise be seen to such advantage, for the Baidar Gateway faces due east, and looks straight out over the wide expanse of the Black Sea. We lunched on the verandah of one of the inns, which seemed to hang like a bird-cage over the very centre of the valley.

Our horses had two hours to rest while we enjoyed a

simple repast, consisting of tea, eggs, bread and butter, melon and walnuts: the last named luxuries we had brought with us, as well as the tea. A fabulous price was charged us for the eggs and samovar; but this was not surprising in consideration of the cost of transporting provisions to a spot so difficult of access. About three o'clock, the horses having once more been put into harness, we began to descend into the valley. From the verandah of the inn the descent looked steep and dangerous, but we found that it was not really so. On a rocky ledge half way down the incline from the Baidar Gateway to the sea stood a recently built church of pure Byzantine architecture, which a wealthy Russian, who owns part of the valley, had built there at his own expense, evidently with an eye to improving the view. We could not refrain from regretting its presence, and thinking how much more lovely the valley must have looked without it: but opinions differ. We descended to a spot a little below the church, and then, after passing through a rocky tunnel, turned sharply round to the left and found ourselves upon a road that wound close beneath steep rocks rising to a giddy height, and often quite perpendicular. We were now upon the riviera. Some of the mountain peaks were shaped fantastically, like the Dolomite peaks seen from Polazzo and Ti di Cadore. Fresh grandeur began to meet our eyes at every turn. Now came a crag towering high into the blue, now another with sides like the dentated walls of some ancient castle with bastions and turrets all complete. On and on we drove, with ever bolder crags, ever deeper ravines filled with pine forests, on our left, and a verdant slope like a beautiful garden stretching gently down to the open sea on our right. The green foliage of walnut trees, chestnuts, mulberries and needle-pointed cypresses, veiled the undulations of the valleys, and half hid the marble villas of Russian noblemen, or millionaires, that were scattered in all the loveliest nooks. At one moment our eyes rested with delight on the glorious expanse of the lake-like sea, brilliant in the afternoon sun; at another they were drawn with a

feeling of fascination to the terrible peaks, some of which bent their majestic heads right across our path, and threatened to fall and bury us alive as our carriage crawled at their base. Fearful earthquakes must have rent these mountain sides in days prehistoric: nothing else could have hung those giant masses of rock so menacingly above the soft green valleys, or have given them those weird and fantastic shapes. Here and there a Tatar village clung to the sides of a precipice, or peeped out of hanging greenery. The Tatars build their huts against the crags in such a way that the rock forms the back wall of their dwellings, and shelters them from the strong winds that blow down from the ravines in stormy weather with such force that pedestrians are swept off their feet. The roofs of the Tatar huts are flat and covered with earth; they project over the front walls, and, resting on poles, form a verandah which their owners can sit beneath, or sleep upon, in hot weather. The Tatars keep their grain in large baskets slung on poles to prevent the rats from stealing it, and stack their hay in the branches of trees, just as the Sarts keep it in Turkestan. We met several of the long Tatar carts, full of pretty oval-faced, red-capped children, with gipsy complexions, black, laughing eyes, and pearly teeth. These children had very few traces of the Mongol about them; but for the red fez and baggy trousers they would have passed for Italians. In many of them the broad flat nostrils of the East were replaced by the delicately shaped straight nose one sees in northern Italy. This phenomenon is easily accounted for when we remember that the Tatars of the south coast are of mixed ancestry, being descended, partially from Greek colonists and partially from the Genoese, who remained on the coast after the Genoese Republic had abandoned its once flourishing possessions there. We passed through many villages, the dwellings of which came close to the road on either side. Some of the houses were lit with petroleum lamps as it began to grow dark, and the effect was very picturesque. In every valley we came to there peeped

above the trees at least one "little Versailles," which had its gardens, its fountains, and its shady pine or olive groves.

One of the valleys is called Cimiez. At its entrance we noticed advertisements of "Pensions," which, to judge by the elegant appearance of their gleaming marble colonnades and their luxuriant lawns, must have been originally intended for private villas. These are filled all the winter with consumptive invalids.

Great boulders, fallen from the towering cliffs, separate Cimiez from Aloupka, a slope overhung by the gigantic peak known as Ai Petri, which raises its head some four thousand four hundred feet above the level of the sea. The reader must not think for a moment that the mountains—which have to be mentioned in connection with every green valley—cast any gloom over these fairy-like spots; they overhang them literally, but they do not overshadow them: the afternoon sun has free access to the valleys till it has almost set, and all that the mountains do is to act as a gigantic peach-wall in the near background.

Aloupka was formerly the country seat of Prince Woronzoff; his palace is known as the "Crimean Alhambra," on account of its semi-Moorish architecture. Prince Michael Woronzoff was born in St. Petersburg, but received his education in England, where his father, Count Simon Woronzoff was ambassador; his only sister, Catherine, married an English peer, the Earl of Pembroke. Curiously enough, I visited the country seat of the Pembroke family at Wilton, near Salisbury, a few weeks after my return to England, and, seeing there a portrait of the late earl, who died in 1895, remarked to my companion that he had quite a Russian type of face. I did not then know of Catherine Woronzoff's marriage with one of his ancestors. Prince Woronzoff served in the Russian war with Turkey, and rose rapidly to the rank of major-general. After his promotion he again spent several years in England. In 1823 he became Governor of New

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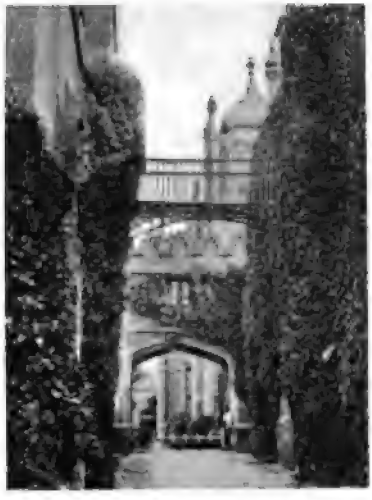
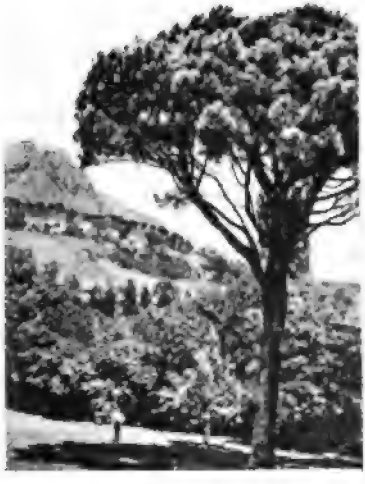
Entrance to Woronzoff Palace, Aloupka.



Carriage road after Baidar Gateway.



The park at Aloupka.

The Rose Walk, Massandra.

[*To face page* 316.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Russia, which province included the Crimea; its capital was Odessa. In 1845 he was appointed Viceroy-General of the Caucasian provinces, and lived part of the year at Odessa and part at Tiflis, with the splendour of a king; and, indeed, the stretch of country which he governed was wider than any kingdom in Europe, Russia alone excepted. Here is a description of his residence at Aloupka, written in 1855:* "The house is laid out to accommodate an immense number of visitors, and has a handsome library and a spacious hall, like that of the Alhambra. Exotic plants fill the halls and cover the galleries, making it fairy-land. The garden is unique, with its grottoes, cascades, and the crater of an extinct volcano. Huge grotesquely-shaped masses of rocks are interspersed with fountains, cascades, and artificial ponds, beds of flowers, shady walks and arbours. The walls of the house are of green-coloured granite, which is so plentiful that even the roads are mended with it." Aloupka is a spot even warmer and more sheltered than Nervi; the hills shut it in completely on the north-east, and west, and the sea bounds it on the south. Many little rivulets run down to the Aloupka valley from the mountains, and keep its parks and gardens exceptionally verdant. There are comparatively few houses at Aloupka; its whole population comprises only a thousand souls, but its two hotels are well filled with visitors during the season. The Woronzoffsky Park lies close to the sea shore, and has upwards of a hundred little villas sprinkled on either side. Several times a day, in fine weather, a little steamboat plies between Aloupka and Yalta; the latter is about ten miles distance by the carriage drive, along which there runs a little omnibus, much patronised by economical tourists. Seven of the above-mentioned villas are *pensions*, mostly filled with invalids who have been banished from the north by doctors' orders. One commodious pile, with an annex, is a sanatorium for children, with two hundred and fifteen beds; anæmic, scrofulous, or delicate children are received here, and it is open the whole year.

* Mrs. Nielson.

Only those who have experienced the polar winds of St. Petersburg, those veritable death-traps, which catch you at every corner, even in August, can rightly appreciate what a boon such a sanatorium is to the anxious parents of delicate children. A few years ago there was nothing for it but to go to the south of France for the winter months, and even now a large proportion of the visitors to Nice, Mentone and Bordighiera are Russians. The cost of keeping a child at the Aloupka sanatorium is fifty roubles a month, a little more than five pounds sterling, but the children of people who are hard up are received at the reduced price of thirty roubles. The way in which the Tatar fleeces innocent visitors to Aloupka is nothing less than bloodcurdling: they consider them their lawful prey. Let me warn intending travellers that it is necessary to bargain for everything, and fatal to pay for anything in advance. Aloupka is one of the most expensive spots in this Riviera. A Russian who can get rooms for the equivalent of seven pounds a month at Yalta cannot get them for less than ten at Aloupka, where there is no town, only a simple village with a few shops. Still it is evident that things will not remain long as they are in this Russian Nervi, for a building company has already been formed, whose efforts, not only in actual house building, but also in the laying on of water, electric light, and like improvements, will soon turn it into a flourishing health resort, from which shops as good as those of Yalta will not be long absent. In 1903 six thousand tourists visited Aloupka. For those who make a long stay and require amusement, there is a small summer theatre; it has room for an audience of four hundred people. I may also mention that since the spring of 1904 there has been founded a club for the benefit of residents.

The palace of Aloupka was built after the plan of an English architect in 1837, and is still worth a visit, though the Woronzoff family carried off all their movable property when they parted with the place, and compared with what it was fifty years ago, it has now a somewhat deserted appearance. The beautiful park is free to visitors, but a

Tatar guide has to be engaged by those who would penetrate into the palace. The Russians say that England offered fifty thousand roubles for one of the six marble lions at the entrance; and, indeed, the sleeping lion is a magnificent piece of work, but I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement.

The drive from Aloupka to Yalta is, if possible, even more enchanting than that I have described. It is a drive through vineyards, olive groves, and avenues of cypresses. But to fully appreciate the beauty of nature here one must leave one's carriage and explore for oneself the cool green recesses among the rocks, the hidden nooks beneath the shade of luxuriant trees, and the little rills that sparkle down from the mountains behind.

Yalta lies close to the sea shore, upon the green slope of a lordly mountain whose top is bare and jagged, and often hidden by floating clouds. The town owes much of its importance to the fact that it is a safe harbour for ships. A hundred years ago it was nothing but a poor little fishing village; now it is Russia's "Nice." All its hotels are packed during the season with many Russian fashionables, and more who ape at fashion. We drove to the "Russia," which has the reputation of being one of the best hotels in Europe, and were fortunate in being able to secure accommodation, considering that we had not written beforehand. The hotel, which has two handsome wings and tall pine trees on either side of its central door, is approached by a sweeping carriage drive, and a broad flight of steps leads up to the terraced entrance. Dinner was just over, and ladies and gentlemen were clustered in lively groups on the steps and under the porch. The harbour opposite was one blaze of electric light. The ladies were in light attire, but not *décolletées*, and the gentlemen were many of them in full military uniform. The scene was gay and festive, and the merry groups of young people reminded one of the guests at a garden party. But as for ourselves, we were travel-stained and tired after our long drive, and covered with white dust from the

chalky road. Under the circumstances it would have been pleasanter to enter by a side door than to unload our baggage and mount those imposing steps under the curious gaze of so fashionable a crowd. But there was no other entrance for travellers, and we were compelled to run the gauntlet. We had our innings later, however, for we sat on the terrace ourselves the next day and watched many arrivals, as well as the elegant departure, of some of those who had so cruelly scrutinised our dusty arrival. We found the "Russia" an excellent place in which to study the upper and moneyed classes of Muscovite society, as well as another class equivalent to that which may be met with at the "Gezireh Palace" at Cairo, of which, in fact, we were somewhat reminded. Here, it must be remembered, all the guests were Russians, ourselves only excepted, and all the dresses were French, or meant to be so. The proprietor of the hotel* was a Swiss: he had bought it from a Russian admiral who could not make it pay. Several staring notices about caviare and other dainties were placed about the hotel in Russian, but there was no attempt to meet the wants of foreigners ignorant of the language. One felt that none but Russians were expected here. I learned, however, that six months before our visit one or two English or French people had come for a night or so. Exorbitant prices are asked for even the worst rooms in all the Yalta hotels during the season, and the only way to get anything at all reasonable is to engage rooms long beforehand, by the month. The lady who had the room next to ours had taken it for the whole season; she felt a little chilly the second night of our stay there, and, without ringing for a servant, tried to light the great stove in the wall between our two bedrooms with her own hands. The result was that about an hour after we had retired to rest we were awakened by a stifling smell of smoke. The stove had not been used for months, and the smoke had come through to our room in volumes, instead of rising by the chimney. Thinking the hotel was on fire we rang our bell

*It was built by a company some thirty years ago

furiously, and when it was answered, proceeded to use the strongest words we knew in Russian, with the result that our fears were calmed and another room was given to us for the rest of the night. One hardly expects such disturbances in "one of the best hotels in Europe," but accidents will happen. In Russian hotels the restaurant is quite apart from the rest of the arrangements, and you are asked to pay for each meal before rising from the table. There is no *table d'hôte*. We spent much of our time on the terrace, enjoying the bright soft air and the changing purple tints upon the mountains, and had many opportunities of observing the Russians at leisure. Port Arthur was still holding out heroically against the Japanese, and Stössel was still a hero. A man appeared amongst us about eleven every morning with news-sheets supposed to contain the latest telegrams from the front. They were lazily bought by the idlers on the terrace, evidently as a matter of form, for no one seemed in haste to read them, and ordinary conversation on local topics was continued immediately after their purchase. I bought one with the rest, and found, as usual, that its "latest telegrams" were little paragraphs translated from the number of the *Daily Telegraph*, which I had already received from England. The conversation was entirely Russian: the only time we heard a word of any other language was when some young ladies, seeing the *Daily Telegraph* in my hand, began to show off their knowledge of the English language for my benefit. Fifty years ago we should probably have heard more French than Russian. I remember hearing an English governess, who had spent some thirty years in Russia, say that one of her pupils, the son of a nobleman, had had difficulty in getting into the diplomatic service on account of the fact that although he was a good French, German, and English scholar, he could neither speak nor understand his own language. Things are quite different now, and such a case as that can never occur again; though to know English well is the hall-mark of a Russian aristocrat, just as to know German is that of a Russian business man.

Most of the guests breakfasted in their bedrooms. Lunch could be had from eleven till one. Each party chose their own time; they straggled into the restaurant and took possession of a table just as it suited them. One missed the sight of cosy gatherings round small tea-tables for afternoon tea; nobody thought of such a thing: that delightful English institution has not yet penetrated to the Russian riviera. People took their dinner any time they liked between five and seven, and spent the evening at the theatre, or sitting in the garden listening to the band. There was no changing of dress for the evening. The elegant hats and morning dresses in which the ladies appeared at lunch were worn all day. I only once saw a lady without a hat during the whole of our stay. This accounted for the innumerable bandboxes which accompanied every departure. On the lower terrace of the hotel there was a restaurant for outsiders, who flocked thither in the evening to dine at little tables in the open air and listen to a good band; these represented the lower middle-class, and their dress, which attempted to be fashionable, was often that of exaggerated taste. Flowered cottons, brilliant sateens and unbecoming boas, all helped to impress us with the fact that this really was Russia's "Nice." In the hotel restaurant prices were much higher. We were charged the equivalent of a halfpenny for every lump of sugar we took in our tea, and everything else was on the same scale.

The Governor's wife, who was spending the season at Yalta, was a pleasant-looking woman of about forty years of age. She used to sit on the terrace most of the day, at the top of the flight of steps, and as everyone of any standing seemed to be acquainted with her, she had a lively time of it, bowing and chatting with the guests as they passed out or in. On one occasion, when an elderly officer presented himself, she stooped and kissed the crown of his bald head as he bowed before her. The sight took me back to Turkestan, where I had seen the wife of the Governor-General greet an officer in that way; it is a pretty

custom. The Russian ladies were, for the most part, elegant and graceful in their movements and their Parisian toilettes looked well. Their *tout ensemble* was more successful than that of American women who get their dresses from Paris. The American woman looks like a beautifully dressed doll, whereas the Russian woman looks like a well-dressed lady, whose personality none would forget on account of her clothes. The vulgar element was, of course, not wanting; there was the stout *bourgeoise* mother with her marriageable daughters, who eyed everyone sharply, as though she would like to penetrate with a glance to their social position and the length of their purse: there was the gay actress, with a host of cavaliers; and the solitary bachelor, who had a little table all to himself at meal times, and seemed to be in a state of constant reverie. But the charm of the place lay in the children, who were prettily dressed and remarkably well behaved. Each party of little ones was looked after by a governess, and a nice old nurse; the nurses carried the white-robed babies about with motherly pride, and were pleased when their little charges attracted admiring notice.

Mrs. Guthrie, who spent a few hours at Yalta in 1873, described it as a "coquette in white," and that epithet still holds good. The coachmen are all dressed in spotless white; the basket-work of the phaetons is white, the uniform of the schoolgirls of the High School, the dresses of many of the ladies, and the caps and uniforms of the officers are mostly white. Even the members of the much hated bureaucracy are whited sepulchres—at Yalta. This is "where the Russian nobles play at simplicity," and where there is a holiday atmosphere that makes everybody feel glad without knowing why. It was really interesting to watch the daily arrivals and departures. Tatar boys were always at hand with bunches of red and yellow roses, arranged so tightly and stiffly that they looked like variegated cauliflowers. The gentlemen had to buy these atrocities and present them to their lady friends on their departure as a

matter of course: it was the thing to do, no man could escape it. Every lady who drove away carried a posy in her hand. The flower beds in the garden which lay at the foot of the hotel steps were full of fragrant flowers—red, pink and yellow roses, festoons of clematis, begonias, and magnolias in profusion.

Yalta is now a town of twenty thousand inhabitants. She does little trade, in spite of her harbour, but is known all over Russia as one of her finest health-resorts; crowded with visitors in the early autumn, she is never entirely without them at any season of the year. The town lives by what she makes out of her visitors; whether they come as invalids to recruit, or as holiday-makers on pleasure bent, they leave more money behind them than frugal minds approve of, and bitter remarks are sometimes heard —a natural consequence. The houses are all hotels, furnished apartments, or pensions; all the girls of Yalta become servants, and all the boys cabmen. Barbers and chemists abound, the proprietors of droshkies thrive, and the twenty thousand annual Russian visitors to Yalta are not an ill wind that blows nobody any good. The people, it must be understood, who receive the most cordial welcome, are not the sick, whom the hotel-keepers make a difficulty about taking in at all, but the rich, the frivolous, and the gay. With regard to climate, Yalta is preferable to Nice: there is less rain in winter and a great deal more sun in autumn, while the summers are cooler.

One of the favourite excursions from Yalta is that to Livadia, the quiet nest where the present Emperor and his family have spent so many happy months. The distance from Yalta to the entrance of the estate of Livadia is only two versts, but it is another two versts to the palaces after you are inside the grounds. The Imperial family travel from Sebastopol by sea. Their yacht anchors close to Yalta, and a little steamboat lands them at Livadia. Livadia lies, like Yalta, on the lower slope of a mountain, and reaches to the sea shore from a little above the post road which cuts through it. There are two palaces—the

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View of Yalta.

The Imperial Palace, Livadia.

[*To face page* 324.

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Large Palace, and the Small Palace, and a splendid orangery filled with rare exotic plants. The Large Palace, which is red in colour, is built with two storeys, and has fine windows especially adapted to take in the glorious view. Round it there is a beautiful garden with every kind of choice flower imaginable. Beyond the garden is a park with tall cypresses, and still taller poplars; luxuriant pines and firs, mingling with almost every kind of flowering tree; a velvet lawn, reminding one of old England, carpets the ground in front of the palace, which, with its airy balconies, large windows, and wide galleries, seems to melt away among the surrounding verdure. The interior is simplicity itself, and in harmony with the beauty of the place. No heavy silks, velvets, or brocades, no gildings greet the eye of the visitor to the Imperial dwelling, but all is bright and cheerful, and from every window there is that glorious view of the wide sea. The boudoir of the dowager Empress is fitted up with Chinese furniture and curios. The walls of the various rooms are covered with family portraits and views of the Caucasus and Crimea, the work of Russian artists, among whom may be mentioned the famous sea painter Aiversofsky. The Small Palace is not far from the large one. Its rooms are small, with balconies overlooking the sea. It was in a bedroom in this palace that Alexander III. breathed his last. There are two churches in the grounds. The larger one, built in 1875, is near the post road; the other is close to the palace, and serves as the Imperial chapel; a small doorway connects it with the cabinet of the late Emperor.

The grounds of the estate slope gently down to a pretty little sandy beach, where the present Empress has spent many a pleasant hour in the company of her four little girls. Her Imperial Majesty loves this quiet retreat, where her days can be spent as simply and as peacefully as those of a private individual. I remember hearing from a Russian friend that a musical cousin of hers, while staying at Yalta, was frequently invited to play duets with the Empress, and pass the evening at Livadia; at dinner she

found herself placed between the Emperor and Empress, and treated as one of the family.

I have heard artists complain of the monotonous blueness of the sky on the French Riviera. They could never feel this want of change in the Crimean sky, for here there is an endless variety in the tints, not only of the sky, but of the mountains and of the sea. The photographs I took of Yalta, Aloupka, and Livadia, all show beautiful floating cloudlets, with the exception of those taken in the early mornings, and in them the mist is seen rising above the tall points of the poplars and cypresses, and partially hiding from view the jagged rocks that rise so precipitately behind the houses. Six versts from Yalta, and contiguous to Livadia, is the picturesque estate of Orianda, which formerly belonged to the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaiévitch. There is an ascending path near the entrance to Livadia, which winds upwards past a grove of young cypress trees, and through the vineyards to a spot where you can look right down upon Orianda. It must have been here that Prince Viasemsky stood when he saw the fascinating picture he describes in his poem. He likens the sea to a bright stretch of brocade, and the rivulets to streams of gold; the sparkling waters remind him, first of diamonds in their brilliancy, then of turquoises in their blueness, and then again of sapphires and emeralds. He notes the carpet of soft green that borders the sea, and then goes on to depict in a few well chosen words the moss-grown, and rampart-like rocks in which the white palace of Orianda is built like a seagull's nest.

From Yalta to Gourzūf there are two carriage roads; the upper one leads through Gourzūf to Aloushta, and then branches inland to Simpheropol; the lower one cuts through the estate known as Lower Massandra, and leads by way of the Botanical Gardens at Nikita to Gourzūf. The traveller by the upper road passes through the charming estate of the Mordvinoff family, which was embellished and enlarged by the present Count Mordvinoff as recently as 1901. Almost opposite to it is a cemetery; here the

poet Nadson is buried. A little beyond the Mordvinoff estate are to be seen a number of elegant villas, built of white stone, and standing in their own gardens. About four versts from Yalta is a sign-post pointing to the two Massandras; the Upper Massandra on the right, and the Lower Massandra on the left. The Upper Massandra is considered by some to be the most beautiful estate on the south coast; its park is the finest in the Crimea; its vineyards stretch over hill and vale, and its forests and meadows cover many acres; it is part of the property of Prince Woronzoff's descendants. Tickets of admission to the park are issued gratis at the lodge to all who care to apply for them, and the tourist may wander at his own sweet will among paths lined with rose trees, whose blossoms of every sort and colour are exquisite in April and May, and very beautiful in autumn, too; he may rest beneath the shade of spreading palms, and high laurel bushes, or lose himself among tropical pine-trees, such as are to be found nowhere else in Europe; here he will find thickly-flowering magnolias, and a grove of chestnuts, which fill the air with their fragrance in the month of April. Upper Massandra is situated at the foot of a steep cliff, and almost hidden from view by its surrounding pine trees and groves of hazel-nuts. Mountain breezes blow around it and add to the charm of its romantic position. Tourists go in great numbers to visit its newly-built Imperial palace, its old church, its grotto in the cliff, and its waterfall. The palace, which is built in the style of Louis XIII., was only finished in 1900; it cost five hundred thousand roubles. The church, built in the Doric style, is surrounded by nut and oak trees, said to be hundreds of years old; one of these venerable trees serves as a campanile, for the church bell is suspended from one of its branches. A little spring rises under the altar of the church, the clear pure water of which is always icy cold, even in the hottest summer weather. The natural grotto, interesting on account of the gigantic boulders torn from the cliff, which form it, is easily reached from the carriage road, and can be illu-

minated by the aid of candles or magnesium. The waterfall is in reality a very large spring, which supplies Yalta with drinking water, and forms a grand cascade at certain periods of the year.

Opposite the lodge where the tickets for visiting Massandra are to be obtained is the entrance to the path which leads, through the forest, to the villa of the forester who superintends the Crown forests in the vicinity of Yalta. Here sick people come in numbers to breathe the health-giving air of the mountain pines; they bring refreshments with them, and stay the whole day. The path to the forester's villa is three versts in length, and extremely picturesque; it passes through large tobacco plantations, groves of oak trees, and finally through a forest of pines. All round the villa the pine forest is intersected with mountain paths; some of which lead out on to the high over-hanging cliffs on which grow pines of a size that can only be described as gigantic. In 1904 a restaurant was opened near the villa, and tourists can now obtain a samovar, milk, eggs, mineral waters, and other refreshments. In fact there are restaurants of this simple kind dotted all over the southern coast, and more is being done every year to make life easy and delightful for invalids, as well as for excursionists. Every year brings a larger number of visitors.

A little beyond Massandra are the famous Botanical Gardens of Nikita, which were opened in 1811, through the efforts of Pallas the naturalist. They were intended by their founder to be a nursery for tropical plants, as well as for every species of plant peculiar to the south of Russia. In the gardens there is an interesting botanical museum, in connection with which a school of market-gardening and vine-growing was opened in the park below in 1870. Young men are trained at this school in all branches of practical gardening, as well as in all the arts connected with the manufacture of wine. A laboratory is attached to the school, at which local vine-growers can get the quality of their wine tested by chemical analysis. The park,

which is open to visitors, abounds in beautiful exotic plants that have been successfully acclimatised in this warm and sheltered spot, whole groves of magnolias, laurels, cypresses, Judas trees, fig trees, cedars of Lebanon, cork trees, etc. Roses grow here to perfection in no less than a hundred varieties. Little bridges thrown across the streamlets connect the winding paths, some of which lead unexpectedly to cool grottoes, where moss and ferns have been trained to grow amongst rocks and boulders.

The exquisite stretch of riviera between Yalta and Nikita, which goes by the Tatar name of Magaratch, is covered with villas belonging to well-known Russian families. In the grounds of one of them a mineral spring has recently been discovered, the waters of which have been pronounced by doctors to be a specific against indigestion and its kindred complaints. Besides the Botanical Gardens, and the School of Gardening at Nikita, there is the Magaratch wine manufactory to be inspected. It belongs to the Crown, and is perhaps the most perfect institution of its kind in Russia. More than a hundred varieties of the grape are employed in the making of its wines. It is distant about one verst from the Botanical Gardens, and charmingly situated. The table and dessert wines of Magaratch have a world-wide reputation. The establishment, which was founded in 1812, is more for the scientific perfecting of wines than for the amassing of money by their sale, and in this respect it has been extremely successful during the last few years. An enormous quantity of wine is stocked in its two great cellars. The premises may be inspected by visitors, and are a very interesting sight. The cleverest wine-specialists in Russia have nearly all undergone a two years' training at Magaratch.*

* Emile Delarge, in his chapter on the Crimea, says: "Le nombre de cépages cultivés en Crimée est très considérable; on n'en compte pas moins de 600, dont la plupart ont été importés de France, d'Italie, d'Espagne, et des autres contrées viticoles de l'Europe, ainsi que de l'Amérique et du Cap." There is plenty of sunshine to ripen the fruit. Mrs. Holderness, who spent four years on the Russian riviera, says that during her first year of residence there she had only four days without sun. See "Journey to the Crimea," 1823.

My readers may think that in a previous chapter I have spoken rather disparagingly of the fruits of the Crimea in general. That may be so, but I cannot speak highly enough of the nuts produced in the peninsula; the walnuts are the finest I have ever seen or tasted, and the hazel-nuts and filberts are among the finest and sweetest in the world. The Tatar women make long expeditions into the nut woods on the mountain sides in autumn, and come back laden with nuts. Walnuts form the chief food in Tatar homes for weeks together; one walnut tree alone has been known to produce an incredible number of walnuts.* Crimean filberts find their way to St. Peters-burg in September, where they may be purchased at the equivalent of eightpence a pound.

We drove from Yalta to Gourzūf by the lower road, which ran between waving vineyards for miles together. The vines were trained on perpendicular sticks, as we train our hops in Kent. The leaves in most of the vineyards were already tinted with autumn red, and thick clusters of small black grapes hung beneath them on every vine. In other countries the fruit would have been gathered before it reached this over-ripe stage, but here it is the custom to let the fruit ripen till it almost drops from the stem. These small black grapes are very sweet and rich in their flavour, and the wine made from them is thick and strong and more of the nature of a liqueur. Gourzūf lies on the seashore about fourteen versts from Yalta, and can be reached by a little steamboat which takes visitors across in fine weather, but it is far better to drive through the vineyards. All at once, at a bend in the white road, we caught sight of a miniature Gibraltar, stretching out into the blue sea, with white Tatar houses creeping up its rocky sides. The Tatar town, or "Old Gourzūf," reminded us of a piece of brown honeycomb; each native dwelling

* Mrs. Holderness wrote: "I have been confidently assured that a single tree has been known to produce sixty thousand walnuts yearly, and a respectable proprietor of Sudak told me that a tree in his possession bears annually as many as forty thousand." This lady saw a standard apricot tree at Karagoss, near Yalta, the girth of which was eighteen feet one inch.

with its verandah in front looked like a cell. Behind this little Gibraltar, was a semi-circular bay, bounded on the further side by the steep crags of a round-topped mountain, whose southern side lengthened out into the bay in a gentle slope till it formed a rocky peninsula.

"New Gourzŭf" is an estate of fairy-like beauty, which adjoins the Tatar town; it was bought up by a company in 1902, and turned into a health resort. Nowhere else along the coast is there a spot so well adapted to this purpose; nowhere else has nature burst forth in such glorious luxuriance, and nowhere else are the hotels so comfortable. But alas, you must steer clear of Gourzŭf if you are an individual of moderate means, unless, indeed, you are prepared to sleep on the earthen-floored bedroom of a Tatar inn, and "rough it" among the Tatars. The above-mentioned company have built seven fine hotels in their beautiful grounds. These are known as "The Seven Hotels," and are distinguished from one another by their respective numbers like the avenues of New York—"First Hotel," "Second Hotel," "Third Hotel," "Fourth Hotel," and so on up to seven. We went over three of them and found them fitted up with every luxury and comfort, but they were not full, though it was the height of the season; there were not more than eight or ten guests in each. A few elegant ladies in light summer attire were sitting about on the lawn, as one sees them in the gardens of villas on the Thames in July. But not every Russian mother can afford to take her daughters to a health-resort, however beautiful, where the price per head is never less than thirty-five shillings per day, and I fear it will be a long time before Gourzŭf repays the outlay that has been made upon it. "Second Hotel" is the largest of the seven; it has four storeys, and can vie in its luxury with the Waldorf Astoria. There is a handsome reading room, a drawing room, a library, a music room with a grand piano, and a billiard room to each hotel, not to speak of electric light, and baths. Besides the hotels there are, in the same grounds, seven little detached

villas, which can be hired by families bringing their own servants. To those who, after travelling in every other part of Russia, have come to the melancholy conclusion that there are no decent hotels in the Empire, Gourzūf is a revelation indeed. Between "First Hotel" and "Second Hotel," there is a restaurant pavilion, and at a little distance from it there is a bandstand. In the evenings the whole park is illuminated with electric light, and visitors can stroll in pretty paths among the luxuriant foliage while they listen to music; or lounge upon the velvet grass of the well-kept lawn and watch the play of the fountains. A doctor resides upon the premises, and no food is set before the guests, or sold at the pavilion, before it has undergone the scrutiny of his eye. I should also mention that there is for the use of the guests a church, a post office with telegraph and telephone, a chemist's shop, a milk-farm, and a laundry. The hotels have their own comfortable bathing-boxes on the pretty little sandy beach; those for the use of ladies being quite apart from those for the use of gentlemen. All bathers wear costumes, though in many parts of Russia both sexes are exempt from these incumbrances. A sea bath, without towels, costs the equivalent of thirteen pence, and with towels nineteen pence. In short, to sum it all up in one word, Gourzūf, for those who can afford it, is a paradise upon earth.

We strolled about in the park with a Tatar as our guide; he took us to see a fountain called the Nymph, surrounded by a group of centenarian cedar trees, one of them from Lebanon, and the rest from Italy; he was full of impatience to show us, a little beyond the fountain, the historical villa in which Poushkin once resided. The villa, which is covered with roses, is just as he left it; nothing has been touched. Opposite the villa there is an old plantain called "Poushkin's tree," whose spreading branches easily cover a hundred and fifty people. Close to it is "Poushkin's cypress"; it, too, was a very fine tree, but it has been shorn of half its beauty, by the hundreds of cruel tourists who have felt it their solemn duty to tear

off and carry away a little bit of it. Poushkin resided here in the year 1820, and it was here that he wrote his best poems on the beauties of Taurida. The park contains orange trees,* lemon trees and bay trees, junipers, laurels and tea shrubs, all mingled one with another.

Old Gourzūf has a Tatar population of about a thousand souls; they occupy themselves chiefly in the cultivation of vines and tobacco; some of the richest Tatars have begun to build houses of European form, but very defective as regards sanitation. Frugal Russian tourists can live very cheaply among the Tatars; they can get a room for from five to seven roubles a month, but have to put up with many discomforts besides the earthen floors. Old Gourzūf is worth an afternoon's ramble. Its history, too, is a long one, for its fortress, bits of which still remain, is mentioned in the writings of Procopius. When the Crimea was united to Russia, Gourzūf became the property of Potëmkin, but it has changed hands many times since then. The man whose labours and unceasing energy have given it the right to be called the first health resort in Russia, was M. P. J. Gubonin. He died in Moscow, but his remains lie in the little church at Gourzūf.

A steamboat takes you on from Gourzūf to Aloushta in one hour, or you can drive there in about two hours. Aloushta may be called the Russian Bordighiera; it has neither the fashion, nor the luxuries, nor the high prices of Gourzūf, and it is never overcrowded like Yalta. Life there is simple and quiet, and furnished apartments may be had in many of the pretty villas in its neighbourhood. Aloushta was a village till 1902, when it was raised to the rank of a town; its climate is superior to that of Yalta for the purposes of a health-resort; it gets more sun in autumn and winter, and less sea fogs. This is explained by the fact that the mountains stand a little further back from Aloushta than from Yalta, the sea breezes have

* Neither oranges, lemons, nor olives have been successfully introduced upon this coast. Sudden frosts kill off many of these trees in early spring. Kohl saw at Nikita the trunks of some olive trees that had been planted by the Genoese.

a more bracing effect in summer, and it is slightly colder in winter. The sea bathing is exceptionally good at Aloushta, on account of the freedom of its sea water from the contamination caused by the sewage in so many places. In 1904, a new bathing establishment was already in course of erection, and this will be sure in time to draw an increasing number of visitors. Another attraction is the fact that the grapes grown in the vicinity of Aloushta are of a kind particularly suited for invalids who have been ordered to try the grape cure; they have been found to possess valuable medicinal qualities. Tatars go about selling these grapes, and there are grape-gardens where people can go and gather them to their heart's content for a trifling outlay. The first allusion to the curative properties of the grape occurs in the writings of Pliny. That enthusiastic naturalist recommends grapes as a cure for indigestion, and as a cooling remedy for fevers. The Arabs also knew the curative powers of this fruit, but it was not till about the middle of the eighteenth century that the first establishment for invalids wishing to try the grape cure, was opened in Switzerland. I have already alluded to the enormous wine jars that have been excavated at Chersonese; these are a proof that the Greek colonists must have occupied themselves extensively in the cultivation of the vine. The Tatars, on the contrary, did all they could to destroy the vines they found in the country, for the Koran forbids them to drink wine. When, however, they became Russian subjects, they must have put their consciences in their pockets, for ever since Potëmkin introduced foreign vines into the Crimea, they have devoted half their time to cultivating and selling grapes. A careful examination of the grapes of Aloushta has shown them to contain a larger proportion of iron than do the mineral waters of Franzensbad. The nutritive powers of the juice are shown by the fact that the Tatars manage to subsist entirely on grapes during the gathering season. People recovering from serious illness who want a tonic, are much recommended to try the grape cure at Aloushta; in fact,

these grapes are what the Germans would call an excellent *Nachkur*. The "cure" covers from four to five weeks, and the most favourable time of the year is from the middle of August to the beginning of November. The best time of all is from the middle of September to the third week of October. White grapes are considered preferable to black. Some take the grapes in their natural state, avoiding, of course, the skins and stones, others prefer to drink a glass of the pressed-out juice. The doctors are, as a rule, more in favour of the former method, as in drinking the juice patients might easily overdo it, and harm themselves. A pound of grapes are considered equal to a small tumbler of juice. Some patients have been known to consume as many as forty pounds of grapes in a day.

The only hotel at Aloushta is the "South Coast Hotel," with twenty rooms; the cheapest, and least sunny of which can be had for twenty-five roubles a month, without food; but sunny rooms are as indispensable in the Crimea as they are in Italy—for passing visitors as well as for resident invalids. Many of the rooms in the large hotels at Yalta are absolutely sunless, and so dark by day, that artificial light has to be used even in the summer. There are a number of villas at Aloushta where full board can be had in comfortable sunny apartments for seventy roubles a month, and even less. People who take furnished villas find that servants engaged on the spot demand comparatively high wages.

I have praised the beauty of nature at every halting place along this enchanting coast, till words fail me when I come to describe Aloushta, which has, like the others, its own peculiar attractions, but:—

*La nature se joue du pinceau des hommes; lorsqu'on croit qu'elle a atteint sa plus grande beauté, elle sourit et s'embellit encore.**

Archæologists believe that Aloushta is the *Alusion* mentioned in the writings of the Emperor Justinian. It certainly must have been very strongly fortified in ancient

* Chateaubriand.

times, to judge by the ruins that are still to be seen. In 1900 a sum of eight hundred roubles was set aside by the Imperial Archæological Commission for the restoration of these ruins. On a neighbouring cliff there are to be seen the remains of a church, and an ancient cemetery; and in another part is an old Genoese bastion. Every year, when new houses are being built, or new gardens laid out, a number of copper and silver coins are brought to light amongst the rubbish that is being cleared away, and sometimes ancient vessels of clay are found by the work-people.

Our white-coated driver brought us back to Yalta at a break-neck speed; the reckless way in which the spirited black horses switched us down steep inclines and round apparently dangerous corners, made us shut our eyes in fear of what was coming. It was quite dark as we reached the town, and the cypress trees were like tall white ghosts in the pale electric light of the street lanterns, for the continual passing of tourists' carriages had raised the dry white dust till all the trees near the road were covered with it.

The day we left Yalta by the Odessa steamer the Black Sea was as smooth as a mill-pond. The steamer, however, was four hours late, and we, with a crowd of other passengers, had a weary time of it waiting with our baggage in the hot sun upon the wharf. A report was circulated that the steamer, though due at 9 a.m., would not arrive till the evening, and an officer, who was probably afraid of overstepping his leave, decided to drive to Sebastopol, instead of waiting any longer on the wharf. He had not been gone twenty minutes when the steamer arrived. He could not possibly have reached Sebastopol in less than twelve hours, even by driving at full speed, whereas the steamer got there in five; added to that, the journey cost him twenty roubles instead of three. I mention this incident to show how little dependence visitors to Yalta can place upon the steamers that are to take them home. The very morning after we left, a terrific storm arose, and

everybody who did not wish to be carried off his feet, had to spend the day indoors.*

Everyone was on deck, taking photographs of the beautiful coast, which passed grandly before our eyes, like a slowly-moving panorama. Livadia, Aloupka, Cimiez, came slowly into view, and were in their turn succeeded by visions quite as enchanting. With regret we saw the distance widen between ourselves and Russia's Italy. Where next on God's fair earth shall we feast our eyes on such beauty, and listen with such rapture to the music of the mountain and the sea ?

* Koch, speaking of the severity of these storms, remarked: "The stoutest trees are cracked all round, and vessels are completely shipwrecked. Probably this is the reason why, even on so productive a soil, we never find here stems of trees of any size." This writer saw at Aloupka, in 1850, the two cypresses planted by Potëmkin in 1789. "It is a curious fact," he wrote, "that every cypress now existing in the Crimea has sprung from these two trees."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THEODOSIA AND KERCH.

Through carriages to St. Petersburg—A commercial port—Russian visitors to Theodosia—A great painter—Museum of antiquities—Aiversofsky picture gallery—Inscription on the painter's tomb—Kaffa—Kerch—Hotels—Hill of Mithradates—Fishing industry—Medicinal properties of the mud—Charitable institutions—Pantecapæum—Strabo—The Kerch museum—In the Hermitage—Tumuli—Catacombs—Church of St. John the Baptist—Ancient church vessels—Manuscripts—A Tatar legend.

A BRANCH line connects Theodosia with the main railway line running from Moscow to Sebastopol, and there are through carriages to St. Petersburg. Theodosia is a pleasant halting-place for people travelling to and from the Caucasus, and many Russians embark here for the Far East in Russian steamers, which take them to Constantinople, where they can change into British, French, or German vessels. Theodosia is not a large town, there are only twenty-seven thousand inhabitants, but the situation is picturesque, and the streets are clean and well built. Thanks to her wide and safe harbour Theodosia was chosen by the Government, in 1894, to take the place of Sebastopol as the chief commercial port of the Crimea. Since that date upwards of four and a half million roubles have been spent in improving the harbour, with a view to increasing its possibilities as a trading port. Yet, in spite of the fact that the largest vessels in the world can anchor there with perfect safety, the yearly returns have so far been considerably below expectation, and neither her railway nor her harbour have as yet given Theodosia the important place she was intended to hold. In 1900 a handsome estab-

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Kievsky Gateway, Tula.

[*To face page* 338.

UNIV. OF
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lishment for hot and cold sea-water bathing and for mud baths was opened here, at the cost of twenty thousand roubles, and this has considerably raised the reputation of the town as a health-resort. The sanatorium in question is built after the most approved European fashion, with terraces commanding glorious views over sea and land; with a restaurant, a barber's shop, and a reading-room full of the latest newspapers and magazines. The sea bathing is excellent, with clear water and a sandy shore. Russians also come to Theodosia for the koumiss and grape cures, and in the summer season all the hotels and apartments are crowded with visitors, who stroll along the pleasant boulevards, or sit and listen to an excellent band, which plays every afternoon in a garden near the old Genoese fort, and in the concert hall in wet weather. In the concert hall there hangs an enormous painting called "Theodosia," from the brush of Aiversofsky, the great Armenian sea painter; and in one of the finest of the boulevards is a handsome fountain, put up in his honour, and called "The Aiversofsky Fountain."

The town contains four Orthodox churches, three Armenian churches, one Roman Catholic church, a Lutheran church, and four Tatar mosques. There are high schools for boys and girls respectively, and free schools for those who cannot afford to pay; there is also a free library and a reading-room. The port and the chief streets are lighted by electricity. A rich vein of iron ore having been discovered* in the neighbourhood, M. Nadela, an engineer, has recently erected a large iron foundry in the neighbourhood.

The museum of antiquities was founded in 1811, and in 1872 M. Aiversofsky planned and built a new one at his own expense. At its entrance are two stone lions, which were discovered in the neighbourhood of Kerch on the spot of the old Phanagoria. Amongst the treasures contained in this museum may be noted some stones bearing the inscriptions and armorial bearings of the successive Genoest

* It yields 55 per cent. of pure iron.

consuls, of which one has no less than five escutcheons. There are five paintings on the walls of the building, all of which were painted by Aiversofsky.

The crowning glory of Theodosia is undoubtedly the Aiversofsky Picture Gallery. The pictures, with the exception of one or two, are from the great sea painter's own brush, but they are not all sea pictures. Among them are a "Portrait of the Archbishop Gabriel;" "A Head of a Young Girl;" "After the Wedding;" "Theodosia;" "High Tide;" "The Ruins of Pompeii from the Sea;" "Among the Waves;" "Winter;" "Poushkin's Cliff at Gourzūf;" "Sunrise on the Island of St. Helena;" "The Israelites crossing the Red Sea;" "Dante;" "Fruit Gathering in the Crimea;" "The Rising Moon;" "A Storm;" "Jupiter and Olympus;" "A little Russian Wedding," and many others. There is also a portrait of Aiversofsky by Kramska; his bust, sculptured in Paris in 1889, by Bernstarn; and a portrait of the painter's mother by himself. The gallery became the property of the town at the painter's death; it is open every day from eleven till two. The charge for admission is twenty kopecks (twopence halfpenny), and the money goes to the support of a charitable institution. Aiversofsky died in 1900, and was buried in the graveyard of the Armenian church in which he was baptised. His children have given him a beautiful sarcophagus, on which is inscribed, first in the Armenian language and then in Russian: "Himself a mortal, he has left an immortal name."

Theodosia is a name of Greek origin, and means "the gift of God." The town was founded more than five hundred years before the time of Christ by Greek colonists, who made it an important trading centre. After the original town had been laid in ruins by the barbarians from the north, a new town was built on the site of the ancient one by the Genoese in the thirteenth century; they fortified it strongly, and called it Kaffa; they built fine churches and fountains within its walls, and gave it a splendid supply of water by means of aqueducts. It

became the chief emporium for Indian goods upon the Black Sea. In 1475 it fell into the hands of the Turks, who erected many minarets, mosques and Mohammedan palaces, and altered the name of Kaffa to Keffa, often referring to it as *Kutchuk-Stamboul*, or Little Constantinople. For fifty years after the Crimea had been united to Russia Theodosia lay in ruins, and it was only after the railway had connected it with the rest of the Empire that the town began to develop and its population to increase. When the Russians took it the population consisted chiefly of Armenians; these were ordered to migrate to the districts abandoned by the Nogar Tatars, and many of them perished on the way from exposure to the cold of a severe winter. "In 1782," wrote Mr. Eaton, who was there, "the large city of Kaffa consisted only of 450 houses." "The Armenian women from Kaffa," wrote Mrs. Mathew Guthrie, in 1796, "were more beautiful, and, I think, approached nearer that perfect form which the Greeks have left us in their statues, than the women of Sim." While Kaffa was in the hands of the Turks it became an important slave market—most of the slaves being beautiful Armenian girls.

Kerch, to which we next turn our attention, lies between two seas—the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff. It is always full of life, being the meeting-place of many lines of steamers, and having connection by rail with Theodosia; the line was opened in 1901. Steamers run frequently between Kerch and Odessa, touching at Yalta and Sebastopol on their way; many Russian tourists coming from St. Petersburg and Moscow to "do the Crimea" go direct to Kerch by rail, and avail themselves of these steamers to visit the places of interest along the southern shore of the peninsula. Both Kerch and Theodosia have clean and comfortable hotels, opened in 1903. They are built with pleasant terraces, where visitors can lunch and dine in warm weather; their prices range from one to five roubles a night, according to the size of the rooms; there are also a number of "pensions" close to the sea. The prices in

these two towns are far more reasonable than they are at any of the other places on the riviera.

Kerch is built on the slope of a hill called, even to this day, "the Hill of Mithradates." It is an important trading point between the ports of the Black Sea and those of the Sea of Azoff; but the water in the Straits of Kerch is so shallow that big vessels cannot pass through, and much time is lost in unloading and re-loading. The most important industry is fishing,* and the greater part of the inhabitants are fishermen. Many kinds of fish are caught; the herrings of Kerch are quite as famous all over Russia as Yarmouth bloaters are with us; but unluckily the people are not sufficiently skilled in the curing of fish; they set about in so unbusiness-like a manner that there is a lamentable waste. In 1899 a company was formed for the improvement of this industry, and there are now some ten factories for tinning fish caught in the neighbourhood, and preserved fish is prepared annually to the value of a hundred thousand roubles. Here, too, as at Theodosia, iron has been discovered in the surrounding country. Several large iron mines have already been exploited, and iron has been taken from them to the amount of forty million puds. A large joint stock company, called "The Kerch Mining Company," recently came into existence, but its life was a short one as it liquidated almost immediately. The mud in the Straits of Kerch has been pronounced by the doctors to contain valuable medicinal properties, and two recently erected sanatoriums for mud and sea bathing are thronged with visitors between the months of May and September. There are fifteen charitable institutions in Kerch, one of which is a foundling hospital, with an infant school and a little chapel attached.

On the very spot where the Russian town of Kerch now stands there once stood the capital of the kingdom of the

* When Kerch was a Greek colony fishing was one of the chief sources of its wealth. Many of its coins bore the impression of a fish. The coins of ancient Byzantium, which owed the origin of its commercial and maritime consequence to a neighbouring fishery, had on one side of them a fish-hook in the centre of a laurel crown. See Mathew Guthrie on this subject.

Bosphorus—Pantecapæum. Some say that Pantecapæum was founded by Milesian Greeks in the fifth century before Christ; others are of the opinion that it was founded a century earlier. The earliest reference to the town occurs in the writings of Strabo; that historian refers to the acropolis of Pantecapæum, and to a harbour on its western side, where thirty ships could ride at anchor. The acropolis seems to have stood upon the Hill of Mithradates, and to have been the central point of the city, which extended for a distance of twenty stadia on every side; the acropolis was the citadel, or kremlin, of Pantecapaeum. Like Chersonese, Pantecapæum was originally an independent republic. Made rich by their extensive commerce, the citizens embellished their town with all manner of beautiful buildings, temples, statues, and other works of art; but once under the power of Rome the glory of the city began to wane; Greek culture, which had reached its zenith under the republic, declined rapidly; and even in the days of Mithradates the Great, things were not as they had been. As time wore on Byzantine Christians in their turn were swept away by barbarous hordes.

The archæological museum at Kerch was founded in 1825; at one time it contained priceless treasures of antiquity, but during the Crimean war the French and English officers carried off everything they could lay hands on, and since that time all the best finds have been relegated to a room in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, which goes by the name of the Kerch Room.* Still, however, the local

* Leroy Beaulieu tells his readers that it is to the Hermitage collection from the tumuli of Kerch that they must turn for a portrait of the ancient Slavs: "Là, sur des boucles de ceinture d'or, ou sur des coupes d'argent, revivent, après plus de vingt siècles—le cavalier et l'arche scythes en longues bottes, en pantalon serré, en tunique courte rapellant la blouse ou chemise russe. En dehors des bijoux grecs de Kertch, aussi supérieurs à ceux de Pompéi que l'art d'Athènes le fut à celui de Rome, des figures analogues ornent des joyaux moins fins découverts dans les tombeaux du sud, et qui semblent l'œuvre des Scythes eux-mêmes, assez épris déjà de l'art grec pour l'imiter. Sur tous ces bijoux se rencontrent des types qui semblent appartenir à des races différentes, tantôt manifestement aryens, tantôt témoignant d'un mélange de sang finno-turc." See also McPherson's "Antiquities of Kertch," 1857. (All English writers of the nineteenth century spelt it thus.)

museum is worth a visit; it has an interesting collection of ancient jewellery, ornaments, amphoras, vases, figurines, iron weapons and sarcophagi, and these are added to every year, for the excavations are going on steadily. Everyone who has visited the Hermitage will remember the rich trophies taken from the tumuli of Kerch, the wonderful golden jewellery, the urns, the garments, and all the curious objects found in the tombs of the wealthy dead. In shape some of the tumuli are like the Egyptian pyramids in miniature; the largest, called by the Russians the *Tsarsky Kurgan* on account of its size, is five versts distant from the town. In 1895 an interesting Byzantine catacomb was opened in Constantine Street; its walls are covered with verses from the ninetieth Psalm; on the ceiling there is inscribed a prayer to the Almighty, along with the names of the Christians who were interred there. The catacomb bears no date, but, judging from the style of the inscriptions, archæologists have fixed its probable date as the year 491; it is kept shut up, and it is only by special favour that visitors are allowed to enter it. A second catacomb was opened in 1896, in another part of the town; its ceiling is plastered with lime, and its walls are covered with frescoes; the subject of one is Calypso; of another, Hermes; of another, the rape of Proserpine. These frescoes have been pronounced by local archæologists to date from the second century before Christ. In 1902 a third catacomb was opened; its walls are formed by giant blocks of sandstone closely fitted together; on its floor stand three large sarcophagi, and one little one, evidently that of a child. The entrance to the catacomb was closed by a large stone, on which was chiselled a fine head of Medusa; the walls are plastered and ornamented with various designs. The lids of the sarcophagi are likewise ornamented with bunches of grapes and other designs. Some valuable jewellery, which was found inside the sarcophagi, has been sent to the Hermitage collection. It would hardly be safe to leave golden rings and bracelets in the local museum, even in peace time.

Amongst the historical remains at Kerch may be mentioned the church of St. John the Baptist. It is supposed by some to have been built in the tenth century; by others, who claim to understand the writing that has been discovered upon one of its pillars, its date is fixed at the year 771. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the body of the church was lengthened, and so many alterations were made that there is little now left of the outer wall that can be called old; but the central part of the edifice certainly bears the stamp of age, with its massive windows filled with coloured glass, and its marble columns with Corinthian capitals. Visitors are shown a wooden chalice dating from the sixth century, on which are represented in quaint carving the figures of Our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, and others. There are also two silver cups of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively, and another cup dates from the latter part of the seventeenth. In the church library there are the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, written in Greek upon parchment; the Gospels are the work of the eleventh century; the Acts date from the twelfth.

The Tatars of the Crimea have many legends to tell about the Hill of Mithradates; there is one to the effect that Mithradates was a giant who was changed into a rocky mountain and covered with earth; another legend says that the treasures of a great prince are buried there, secreted in a vault with four compartments, the first being filled with silver coin, the second with bars of gold, the third with amethysts and sapphires, and the fourth with diamonds piled round a marble coffin, in which lies a beautiful girl magician, the daughter of a czar, who was suspected of plotting to hand over all this treasure to certain evil spirits who had made her their willing slave.

The wealth of Mithradates was proverbial among the Romans; Appian wrote in the reign of Trojan that some of his treasures were inherited by him from his Persian ancestors, and others were those which Cleopatra had given into the keeping of the Coans, and which they in their turn

had given up to the King of Pontus; but Mathew Guthrie thought that he got most of his gold from Colchis, which belonged to his dominions, and "which so early attracted the avidity of the Greeks to carry off its golden fleece." "Appian," continues this writer, "tells us that Pompey found in the city of Talura, which went by the name of Mithradates' wardrobe, two thousand cups of onyx set in gold, with such a quantity of costly furniture and horse trappings, set with precious stones, that the Roman commissaires were thirty days in making out the inventory of the palace alone. In another castle he found three large tables with nine salvers of massive gold and of immense value, as they were all set with precious stones. He likewise found here three statues, of Minerva, Mars and Apollo, all of massive gold and most curious workmanship. But what surprises us most in this list is the mention of a pair of gaming-tables made of two precious stones, three feet broad and four long, with men of the same material (so that they must have been chess or draught boards), and on each was a moon of gold of thirty pounds weight. In a third fort, situated in the mountains, was the king's own statue, eight cubits high, with his throne and sceptre, and, lastly, the bed of state of his ancestor Darius, son of Histarpes, King of Persia, all of massive gold."

Plutarch, in his life of Pompey, tells us how the Romans received the news of the death of Mithradates. A letter brought the news to Pompey while he was encamped at Petra. "He entered the camp with it in his hand, and as there was no tribunal ready, and the soldiers were too impatient to raise one of turf, which was the common method, they piled a number of pack-saddles one upon another, upon which Pompey mounted, and gave them this information: 'Mithradates is dead. He killed himself upon the revolt of his son Pharnaces. And Pharnaces has seized all that belonged to his father, which he declares he has done for himself and the Romans.' At this news the army, as might be expected, gave loose to their joy,

which they expressed in sacrifices to the gods, and in reciprocal entertainments, as if ten thousand of their enemies had been slain in Mithradates."

Pompey would not look at the body of Mithradates when it was sent to him, "but, to propitiate the avenging deity, sent it to Sinope." No one can be sure, however, that some other body was not substituted for that of Mithradates, and perhaps it may some day be proved that he was buried at Kerch after all.

The distance from Kerch to Theodosia by rail is about ninety-seven versts, and many smaller places of interest are passed on the way. In the old days Pantecapæum was surrounded by a number of smaller towns with classic names, a few of the ruined walls of which are still to be seen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ODESSA.

Saloon cabins—Bound for Odessa—Early history of Odessa—A mushroom city—The Duc de Richelieu; his remarkable talents—English training—Growth of the city—Trade—Commercial school—The first theatre—Turkish war—Volunteers—A black page—Smugglers—A sorrowful parting—Bismarck—On the quay—The duke's garden—Richelieu's successor—The first newspaper—Museum of archæology—Generosity of Count Woronzoff—Cholera—Crimean war—The allied fleets—Bombardment of Odessa—General Osten-Saken—The southern Palmyra—Mark Twain at Odessa—The railway station—East winds—Low death rate—Export of grain—Factories—College for women—School for peasants—Book shops—Jews—The Italian opera—Amusements—Statue of Catherine II.—Statue of Poushkin.

OUR steamer left Yalta at two in the afternoon, put off a number of passengers at Sebastopol five hours later, and then proceeded to Odessa, where it arrived at seven o'clock the next morning. The journey was a comfortable one, the food was excellent, and the saloons and cabins were not only airy, but elegant. The windows were draped with light-blue curtains lined with satin of the colour known as old-gold, and the walls were pannelled with oak. Many little children appeared at the long *table d'hôte* dinner of five courses, but they behaved so well that their presence was hardly perceptible. Most of the passengers bound for Odessa were residents of that city, but a few were going on to Kieff. We had witnessed many tender partings at Yalta, and had seen one or two, who had left sick friends behind, shed quiet tears. The Russians are a tender-hearted people, and their affections are quite as strong as our own.

Odessa is considered by many Russians to be the fourth

town of the Empire; the order in which they reckon is—St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Odessa. Yet this mushroom city, with half a million inhabitants, is not yet one hundred and eleven years old. The foundation of Odessa was announced to the world by a rescript of Catherine II. on March 27th, 1794, and the completion of the laying out of the new city was celebrated with much solemnity on August 22nd of the same year. That day has ever since been a general holiday with the inhabitants. It was also in 1794 that plans were prepared for the construction of three harbours; one for purposes of quarantine, one for trade, and one for use in time of war. The cost of building a port, an admiralty, barracks and storehouses was estimated at two million roubles, and this sum was granted from the public revenue. The time allotted for the completion of the work was five years. Among the more serious of the difficulties that had to be met in the building of the new city was that of inducing a satisfactory class of Russians to overcome their fear of invasion by the Turks, and settle down there. Many people hesitated to come on account of the isolation of Odessa from all the other towns; even in these days of express trains the position of the city is one of peculiar solitude. There was some fear lest the new port might suffer by competition with Kherson and Nickolaieff. When the first census was taken, at the close of the year 1795, there were found to be only two thousand two hundred and forty-nine inhabitants. These were chiefly peasants who had escaped from serfdom, with some five hundred petty tradespeople, a like number of government officials, six hundred tradesmen who had migrated from other governments, two hundred and forty Jews, two hundred and twenty Greeks, a hundred and forty-six merchants, and about sixty Bulgarians.

So resolutely did the engineers set about their work, that within three months of the date on which they received their command, they had the construction of the three harbours and their wharves actually under way. The

death of Catherine II., which occurred in November, 1796, and the accession of Paul I. to the Russian throne, introduced many changes in every part of the Empire, and the progress of Odessa was seriously interrupted by the recall of her energetic governor, Count Zouboff, as well as that of Vice-Admiral de Ribas. For a time the building was at a standstill. In 1797 the work was once more in full swing, thanks to the foresight and promptitude of the local magistrate, who, seeing that Odessa's trade would suffer by delay in the construction of a port, decided to borrow from the public revenue the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand roubles, and arrange for the loan to extend over a period of twenty-five years.

Alexander I. ascended the throne in the year 1801, and in 1802 the government of New Russia was split up into three governments. Fortunate indeed was the new city in the choice of her first governor; he was a Frenchman, the Duc de Richelieu, who, having been compelled to leave his own country on account of his inclinations towards a monarchic form of government, had sought in Russia a field for the exercise of his remarkable talents. He found scope in New Russia for "his boiling energies," as they have been called by his Russian admirers. An Imperial rescript had invested him with almost absolute power when he entered upon his new duties as Governor of Odessa. He was entrusted with the improvement of the city on all sides and held the supreme command over all the troops who guarded the port in course of construction, and over all the naval officers. His word was law with regard to custom duties, quarantine, and postal arrangements. He strove from the first, amongst other things, to purify the government offices of all corruption, to induce a beneficial class of foreigners to settle in Odessa, to economise the municipal resources, and to secure the most favourable sites for public buildings. It was fortunate for Odessa that the high rank of Richelieu and his friendship with Alexander, gave him immediate access to the Imperial ear; the Emperor's consent to any important step

was thus gained without the harassing and dangerous delays which red-tapism would have inflicted. The building of churches, barracks, public buildings and factories, went on apace under Richelieu's supervision. In 1802 there were already nine thousand inhabitants, and the revenue of the town had risen to nearly fifty thousand roubles. Between 1800 and 1803 two hundred and eighty thousand roubles were spent upon the construction of the port. In 1805 Richelieu was appointed commander of the troops at Kherson, as well as inspector of those stationed in the Crimea, and it was then that, with the consent of the Emperor, he made Odessa the administrative centre of New Russia.

Richelieu now turned his attention to the improvement of Odessa's trade. He took care to come into personal contact with the chief merchants of the city, and kept himself informed, through them, not only of the quantity but of the quality of Odessa's trade, and consulted with the merchants as to the best ways in which it could be satisfactorily increased. The port was widened and all custom duties were reduced by one-fourth. An exchange was built, commercial relationship was formed with the ports of Austria, Prussia and Moldavia; and it was at this period that Austrian, Spanish, and Neapolitan consulships were established. In order that the youth of Odessa might be equipped with a sound commercial training, Richelieu founded, in 1804, a commercial school, with three departments—the lower, the middle, and the higher. In the same year he also founded colleges for the training of the sons and daughters of noblemen; that is to say, of the upper classes, for there was then no middle class. The first theatre was opened in 1805. Houses and shops were built by the citizens, and public gardens were laid out. Foundations were also laid for an Orthodox cathedral, and a Catholic church.

But war broke out with Turkey in 1806, and for six long years Odessa had a bad time of it. Plague visited the city in 1812, and for two successive years caused terrible

devastation. Thanks to the diplomatic talents of Richelieu this did not interrupt entirely the trade between the belligerent countries. The Turks actually got grain from Odessa during the war! On March 16th, 1812, peace was declared, but on July 12th a hostile French army crossed the Russian frontier, and all Russia was called once more to arms. A few days later a ukase freed New Russia from military obligations, but called upon the inhabitants to contribute funds. Richelieu at once gathered together the chief citizens of Odessa, begged them to be true to their Fatherland, and headed the list of subscriptions with forty thousand roubles from his own purse. His example had its effect, and the sum soon rose to two hundred and eighty thousand roubles. Many of the citizens offered themselves as volunteers, and were enrolled in Chichagoff's army corps.

So terrible were the ravages of the plague between 1812 and 1814, that Russian historians speak of those two years as a blank page in the history of Odessa. Some thought that smugglers had introduced the pest into the city, and to obviate any fresh danger of this kind, Richelieu began agitating for Odessa to be declared a free port. He did not succeed in carrying out the idea, however, for it was just then that a change in the political affairs of France, after the battle of Waterloo, drew him back to the land of his birth. We are told that it was with a feeling of the deepest regret that he quitted Russia and his beloved Odessa on September 24th, 1814.

The loss of Richelieu was a heavy stroke for Odessa and the inhabitants parted from him with tears in their eyes, much as the citizens of Berlin parted from Bismarck in 1890. I remember seeing tears on many a cheek when the great chancellor's carriage rolled away from his stately mansion in Wilhelm's Strasse. Here are the words of an eye-witness who described the scene outside Odessa: "The day of the Duke's departure was one of mourning for Odessa; a large part of the inhabitants accompanied him beyond their town and almost overpowered him with their

blessings. More than two hundred citizens escorted him to the end of the first stage of his journey, where they ordered a farewell banquet to be prepared. The Duke was greatly touched by the adoration the people showed for him, though everyone tried hard to repress his feelings out of respect for those of the Duke, but those feelings were beyond control. Every face showed how deeply his departure was felt. As he took his seat in the carriage that was to convey him away from them over the wide steppe, they pressed round him to kiss his hand, or failing that, his coat. 'My friends,' said the Duke, at length, 'I beg you to release me from this painful scene!' They drew back from the carriage, sobbing aloud, and in another moment he was gone."*

On the quay, facing the handsome flight of steps leading down to the landing-stage, we found Richelieu's monument. The best street in the city bears his name, and so also does the boys' public school. The most beautiful garden in Odessa once belonged to Richelieu, and many of its trees were planted by his own hand; it is still called "The Duke's Garden."

On returning to France, Richelieu worked as energetically for his mother country as he had worked for Russia. His share in the promotion of peaceful relations between the two peoples was a very large one. Count Langeron, who succeeded Richelieu as Governor of Odessa, held that post from 1815 till 1823. He also was a Frenchman, and a personal friend of Richelieu's, which fact was a fortunate one for Odessa. The two friends corresponded frequently, and Langeron was able to complete many of the schemes set afloat by Richelieu, including that of making Odessa a free port; and it was during his governorship that the "Richelieu Lyceum" was opened; that several of the streets were paved with stones; and most of the larger

*"Richelieu," says Gamba, "était affable, sans rien perdre de sa dignité; simple, et économe dans ses dépenses particulières, sa libéralité et sa bienfaisance n'avaient pas de bornes. Une population nombreuse fut attirée, je dirai presque entraînée, sous son gouvernement paternel." See "La Russie Méridionale," 1826.

ones planted with the trees that are now the beauty of the city. In 1820, the first newspaper was published. It was written in the French tongue, however, and its title was *Messager de la Russie Méridionale.* Count Langeron was succeeded by Count M. C. Woronzoff, who assumed the titles of Governor-General of New Russia and Lord-Lieutenant of the province of Bessarabia, March 7th, 1823. Count Woronzoff followed closely in the steps of his predecessors, and worked for twenty years to increase the prosperity of Odessa. In a previous chapter I have given a short sketch of Woronzoff's early career.* Russians willingly admit that he gained much by the education he received in our country, and that English ideas imbibed in his youth affected most beneficially the whole of his after life. He was in every sense a true soldier, and the rapidity with which he rose in the army and won renown is still commented on with amazement. As Governor-General of Odessa he showed great administrative talent, and did much, not only to improve the commercial prosperity of the city, but also to improve the educational facilities of its children. He founded several schools; and a museum of local antiquities, which was opened in 1825. I must own, however, that of all the many museums I had the privilege of visiting throughout the Empire, that of Odessa appeared to me to be the poorest. I account for this by the fact that most of the valuable archæological remains which have come to light in this part of South Russia, have been sent to the museum at Moscow. A second newspaper, called the *Odessa News*, and written partly in French and partly in Russian, appeared in 1827. Several of Count Woronzoff's friends were among its contributors. In 1828 the "South Russian Agricultural Society" was founded, and the following year witnessed the opening of the Public Library. Count Woronzoff robbed his own bookshelves to furnish the new library with many useful volumes.

In 1828 war was again declared against Turkey, and

* See Chapter XXIV.

there were more hard times for Odessa; the war was followed, as before, by a terrible plague, which was said to have been brought this time by Austrian men-of-war. An epidemic of cholera followed the plague, carrying off seven hundred of the inhabitants. In 1833 there was a bad harvest in south Russia, and so hard-pressed were the people for bread to eat, that, instead of exporting corn as usual, Odessa had to begin importing it. In the year that Queen Victoria ascended the British throne there was built that wonderful flight of steps down to the sea, which is still the pride and glory of Odessa. Towards the close of the same year plague again visited the city, and it was four months before the dreadful scourge could be expelled. Nevertheless, commerce continued to prosper, and the exports were now valued at more than thirty-four million roubles, and the imports at more than fifty-two and a half million.

Count Woronzoff's direct connection with Odessa, which had covered twenty years, ceased in 1844, when he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the Caucasus. He only survived the change two years. After his death the citizens of Odessa, who had parted with him with sincere regret, were glad to have his remains brought back to them, and interred in their own cathedral.

The next event of importance in the history of Odessa was the Crimean war. The city suffered a cruel bombardment from the combined English and French fleets on April 11th, 1854. The bombardment lasted the whole day, and towards evening all the batteries were enveloped in flames. The Russians, under Schegoleff, bravely defended the town, and finally succeeded in taking three ships from the allies. To this day a battery bears the name of Schegoleff in honour of the brave commander, whose heroic defence had prevented the allies from destroying the town. It was remarkable how comparatively slight were the injuries done to the port during that long and fierce bombardment. Fourteen houses were set on fire by bombs, and a good deal of damage was done to Woronzoff's

palatial residence; three citizens were killed, and eight wounded. Everyone was preparing for a long siege, and great was the amazement of Odessa when the allied fleets, after several days of inactivity in front of the town, sailed quietly away over the sea.

General Osten-Saken spoke and wrote with pride of the fearless courage shown by the people of Odessa the whole of that fearful day. No one thought of self. All were anxious to help in the defence of their homes. Many private citizens spent several whole nights in the outskirts of Odessa, armed to the teeth, to guard against the landing of the foe.

In 1855 Count Alexander Gregorévitch Strogonoff succeeded to the Governor-Generalship, and held it till 1863, when he was called to St. Petersburg to take his place among the advisers of the Emperor. He lived till August, 1891, and died at the age of ninety-five; during his residence at Odessa many important commercial changes took place, and the prosperity of the city increased rapidly. It was between 1872 and 1879, during the Governor-Generalship of Count Kotzbue, that Odessa was connected by railway with Central Russia, and the distance thus considerably lessened between her and her sister towns. In 1890 the post of Governor-General was done away with altogether, and since then the administrative power has been vested in a district governor.

The Russians are very proud of Odessa; she has been called "the southern capital," "the southern Palmyra,"* "a little Paris," "a little Vienna," and so forth. Taken as a whole, she may be called with justice the most European town in the Empire, with her clean wide streets, handsome houses, parks, gardens, and boulevards; her theatres and her cafés. Mark Twain,† who was there about the year 1860, said that the only thing about Odessa that was truly Russian was the shape of the droshkies and the dress of their drivers.

* St. Petersburg has been called "the northern Palmyra."

† See his "Tramp Abroad."

Odessa is the last station on the South Eastern Railway. The general waiting-room for passengers is lofty and spacious; in shape and decoration it reminded us of our late friend St. James's Hall, in Piccadilly. Ten good trains a day connect Odessa with Kieff, Moscow, Kursk, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Kharkoff, Rostoff on the Don, and Baku. She has direct communication by sea with all the more important towns on the Russian riviera; with Constantinople, Port Said, Smyrna, Alexandria, Jaffa, and many other eastern ports. Since 1903 a line of steamers has run between Odessa, Naples and New York.

The worst thing about Odessa is perhaps her climate. Residents complain of baking heat in summer, and of piercing east winds in autumn, winter and spring. All who have gone from other towns to settle at Odessa say that they find the persistent winds and continual damp rainy weather far harder to bear than the healthy continental cold of Northern and Central Russia. The average temperature is nearly that of Paris, Vienna, and Strasbourg; January being the coldest month, and June the hottest. There are days of sharp frost during the winter, but there is seldom any snow to speak of. Throughout the winter there is an unpleasant rawness in the air, even when the sun is oppressively powerful, and the difference between this climate, and that of the Crimea is so great, and at the same time so subtle, that it must be felt before it can be properly understood. It is true that the death-rate of Odessa is considerably lower than that of any other town in Russia, but this is the result of her superior sanitation rather than of her climate.

According to the census, taken in 1900, there were then residing in Odessa two hundred and forty-five thousand Russians of the Orthodox faith; a hundred and thirty-three thousand Jews; twenty-six thousand Catholics; and fourteen thousand Lutherans. The male population far exceeds the female, owing to the fact that so many men are drawn there from other towns by its special trading facilities. Living is cheaper at Odessa than either at St.

Petersburg or Moscow. The inhabitants of the surrounding suburbs and villages occupy themselves chiefly in the cultivation of wheat; in vegetable gardening; in cattle-breeding; and in dairy-farming for the Odessa market; the fishing along the coast is also very extensive.

As regards trade, Odessa is in reality the most important commercial town in the Empire, but, in spite of figures, it is not considered quite the proper thing to rank her above St. Petersburg or Moscow, even in this particular. Her export of grain is incontestably unique; that of St. Petersburg cannot come near it. Her exports in general vary between one-fourth and one-fifth of the entire exports of Russia, both as regards quality and price. The amount of each year's grain exports must depend, of course, upon the harvest. In 1902, when the harvest was a fairly good one, more than a hundred million puds of grain were exported. Before the present war there was some talk of building a special harbour for the export of grain, and of generally improving the export system, which is considered very defective. As regards imports, Odessa takes the second place in the Empire, and St. Petersburg the first.

There are some five hundred factories, producing work to the value of seventy million roubles annually (in peace time). The number of men employed in them is estimated at twenty-five thousand.

As regards educational facilities for the inhabitants of South Russia, new schools and colleges are opened at Odessa almost every year. In September, 1903, a college for the higher education of women was opened; here, special courses can be taken in mathematics, history, the Russian language, the French and German languages, and so on. The college opened with three hundred and twenty-five pupils, who had been chosen from the four hundred and fifty candidates presenting themselves for the entrance examinations, each of whom had previously passed with success through one of the local high schools. There are at present only two more of these colleges in the Empire

—one in St. Petersburg and one in Moscow. As regards schools for the education of the lower classes, especially for the children of the peasants, there is yet a great deal to be done all over Russia, but I may add that more has been accomplished in that line at Odessa than anywhere else. The people of Russia are thirsting for education, and they will certainly get it. A peasant woman said to a friend of mine: "If our children cannot read, they are like people without eyes." The Public Library at Odessa ranks next to the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg, and the Rumantzefsky museum at Moscow, in the value and number of its volumes. It has, in connection with it, three public reading-rooms, also Sunday-schools and night classes for working men. Nothing impressed me more, as I strolled through the streets, than the extraordinary number of booksellers' shops. Being in search of information regarding Odessa, I entered many of them, and found, to my surprise, that their owners were invariably foreigners —Italians, French, or Germans. The best streets are full of well-dressed Jews and Christians, the Jews being perhaps the more smartly dressed of the two. In spite of the figures I have given above, a Russian business man in Odessa assured me that quite fifty per cent. of the inhabitants were of the Hebrew race, and that there was a synagogue in almost every street. "There are two kinds of Jews here," he added, "the Karaim, or Karaite Jews, who left Palestine before the time of Christ, and the Jews who left afterwards. The former, who are in the majority, are greatly liked by their Russian neighbours for their honesty, cleanliness and kindliness of disposition; we cannot get on with the others."

Nearly all the banks are in the hands of Jews, as is the case in every other thriving town in Europe. Russians of the middle class at Odessa are accused of giving too much of their leisure to amusements and dress, and too little to intellectual culture. The class of plays which draws them in such crowds to the theatres is by no means the highest; and this is, in itself, a bad sign. The greatest

actors in Russia find it worth their while to visit Odessa during the winter season, and there are always plenty of people to appreciate the best. As for the Italian opera, it has been the pride of the town for many a decade, and dates back almost as far as the town itself. There are ten theatres; more than fifteen concert halls; fifteen clubs; and some twenty other places of public amusement.

Odessa's wonderful system of canals, her splendid water supply, and her many other advantages, would occupy pages if I attempted to do them justice. To drive down Poushkin Street to the railway station on a dark night is like driving through the Champs Elysées illuminated, but in some parts of the town the lighting is still defective. Many improvements were projected for 1905, but in the present unsettled state of the country many of them are at a standstill. The annual sum spent upon the needs of the town has increased in the last forty years with such rapidity that from six hundred and ten thousand roubles in 1864, it has risen to more than six million. These figures were published at Odessa in 1904.

The statue of Catherine II., the foundress of Odessa, stands not far from that of Richelieu in the handsomest square in the best part of the town. It was unveiled on May 6th, 1900. This striking figure of Catherine in her Imperial mantle, and with her arm outstretched towards the sea, is of bronze; the pedestal is of granite. Catherine is represented as trampling the Turkish flag scornfully beneath her feet—surely not a pleasing sight for the Sultan, were he ever to visit the city. Fifty thousand roubles were spent in the erection of this majestic statue; it is the work of M. Dmetrenko, a native of Odessa.

The statue of the Duc de Richelieu, on the Nikolaiefsky Boulevard, also looks towards the sea with outstretched hand. The square pedestal is ornamented with allegorical bas-reliefs representing Trade, Agriculture, and Justice, on three sides, while on the fourth, facing the sea, is an inscription testifying to the gratitude of the city, and

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The statue of Catherine II., Odessa.

Richelieu Street, Odessa.

[*To face page* 360.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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CALIFORNIA

The Theatre, Odessa.

Entrance to the Theatre, Odessa.

[*To face page* 360.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

giving the dates of Richelieu's administration, and the names of the districts he governed. One corner of the pedestal was damaged during the bombardment by the allied fleets in 1854, and replaced by an iron corner bearing the date "Saturday of Passion Week, 1854." The bronze figure of Richelieu was cast in Paris, but the name of the sculptor is not known.

On the same boulevard there is also a statue of Poushkin. The bronze bust of the poet stands upon a pedestal of granite, which does duty as a fountain, and has dolphins round it spouting water. It bears the inscription: "To A. C. Poushkin, by the citizens of Odessa." Unfortunately, although there is a resemblance to the poet in the features of the bust, the whole thing is badly proportioned, owing to the architect not having cut his garment according to his cloth; want of funds necessitated alterations which proved disastrous. There are several other handsome monuments, but these are the only ones that interested us.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

KISHENEFF.*

Bessarabia—The Carpathians—Heated trains—Engineer's explanation—Size of Kisheneff—First impressions—The first Russian business house—Jewish lawyers—The old bazaar—Jewish faces—An interesting conversation—Tissot and the Jews—Hebrew and German—Poushkin at Kisheneff—A *Judenfreund*—Story told at Kisheneff—Sulphur springs—New museum—A sanatorium—Rich peasants—The grapes of Kisheneff—Comfortable railway carriages.

KISHENEFF is the capital of Bessarabia, a Russian government bordering upon Hungary. We reached it by a branch railway line from a small station on the direct route between Odessa and Kieff. From the train windows we could see that the physical attractions of Bessarabia were far greater than those of the Odessa government. Here the ground broke into gentle undulations, which were enlivened from time to time by gurgling streams crossed by rustic bridges, and country lanes that reminded us of beautiful Surrey. The cottages thatched neatly with straw, and standing in pretty gardens surrounded by hedges, had a decided look of prosperity and comfort; their walls were whitewashed, and their windows and doors painted bright red or blue, or green, according to the taste of their owners, and sometimes all three colours combined. In the distance we could see blue hills, the forerunners of the Carpathian mountains. The air was mild and balmy, a delight after the rawness of Odessa; but alas! the train had been

* The reader must bear in mind that this chapter, as well as the one preceding it, was completed in the summer of 1905, several months before the outbreak of those terrible barbarities, the accounts of which still ring in our ears as this volume goes to press.

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CALIFORNIA

The best shops in Kisheneff.

Prison at Kisheneff.

[*To face page* 363.

heated to a heat unbearable, even for the Russians, and everyone was overpowered. Yet the guard came through and shut every window as soon as it had been opened. A young mining engineer, who was one of our travelling companions, explained to us, with regard to the unbearable heat of the carriage, that the engineers on the trains are paid according to their economy in the use of coal, and that as it saves fuel to heat up the carriages with a good deal of steam all at once, irrespectively of the feelings of the passengers, they find it pays them to do so. They also know that it saves coal to reduce the speed of the train when the ground ascends, and increase it when going down hill; hence the unevenness so often noticed in the speed of Russian trains. But to return to our subject. The town of Kisheneff is by no means bewitching. One is struck, first of all, by the enormous space it covers and the width of its streets, and then by the shabby and dejected look of its low, seldom more than two-storeyed houses. "Like Rome, the town covers several hills," wrote Prince Demidoff, who passed through Kisheneff in 1854. Even then there were one or two streets with fine houses, and some large public buildings; but these were, and are still, only to be seen in the centre of the town. The houses are of stone, and whole streets of them are like shabby bungalows.

The shops, with one or two exceptions, are quite second rate, and were all in the hands of low-class Bessarabian Jews until 1903, when for the first time a first-class Russian business house was opened there. It was as much our sympathy for the children of Israel as any other motive which led us to Kisheneff, and we were anxious to see and talk with some of the Bessarabian Jews. English people are apt to forget that there are as many classes of society among the Jews, as many degrees in the social scale, as there are amongst ourselves in Great Britain; and they also forget that even in Russia the Jews, though all of one race, are of many different nationalities. I opened a volume on a station bookstall the other day and read one sentence; it was to the

effect that wherever there was a Jew, Russia had an enemy. Such a statement is surely a libel on the Hebrew race. Even at Kisheneff, where the Jews have suffered so much, many of the most respectable citizens are Jews; they are loyal to Russia as the country of their birth, and at the same time loyal to their own race. Some of the most distinguished lawyers, doctors, and merchants of Bessarabia are Jews. These men know well that it is as untrue that the atrocities which horrified the world were sanctioned by the Russians as a nation, as it is untrue that the American nation lynched and burned its negroes at the stake. Atrocities have been committed in both countries, and someone is to blame, but in neither case is that someone the nation at large. It is quite true that after the massacre at Kisheneff the hospitals of Odessa were filled with the dying and wounded—that in one case a tailor and his wife were killed, and their children torn limb from limb, and that this was not an isolated one.

We stayed at an hotel kept by a Jew. The window-panes had been smashed at the time of the attack on the Jews and had never been replaced by new ones; so for once we slept in a well-ventilated room. The next day we took a drive in the lowest part of the town, which is known as the "old bazaar," and were surprised to find Jews, Russians, dogs and pigs, all mixed up together in amicable muddiness. I had expected to find the Jews in a sort of ghetto. As a matter of fact, Kisheneff is mainly a large Jewish town, with a few Russian officials and public buildings in its centre, just as Warsaw is a Polish town, with Russian policemen keeping order in its streets. The mud in the bazaar must be like pea-soup, in wet weather, but it was dry on the day of our visit, and we found loaves of bread, vegetables, and other articles of food exposed for sale on bits of dirty matting spread upon the dry mud. A dog came up and began sniffing at each loaf of bread in turn, and using his tongue. Surely no Jew would eat bread thus treated. On all sides of us were Jewish faces; the young girls were so handsome that I could hardly take my

eyes off them; they had crisply curling brown hair, good, well defined features, clear complexions, expressive dark eyes, and long black eyelashes. The boys had the same pretty curling hair as the girls, only that it was short and bushy. Many Jewish houses are built round one court with a single entrance; this, I suppose, is for the sake of the protection afforded. Students of old London tell us that our houses were always built in that way during the Middle Ages, and that it was not safe to build them otherwise.

Later in the day I entered a shop opposite our hotel to buy some picture postcards. The young woman behind the counter was a Jewess; she saw that I was a foreigner, and was very anxious to know my nationality, and the reason of my visit to Kisheneff. She was afflicted with a terrible squint, and so was her father who came in presently. They conversed together in a kind of low German which I understood perfectly. When she heard that I was English, the girl asked:

"Do they kill the Jews in England?"

"Kill them!" I answered. "I should think not indeed!"

"Do they beat the Jews in England?" she asked fiercely.

"Of course not," I replied. "Some of the best men in our country are Jews; they are often our cleverest politicians, and our bravest soldiers; I should like to see them being beaten!"

"Well, they kill them and beat them here," she cried, or, rather, hissed; and her dark eyes flashed.

"Surely none but a very low class of people would do such a wicked thing?" was my tentative rejoinder.

"No, indeed; all classes join in ill-treating the Jews; doctors join the mob, students, everybody."

"Were you here when they did it?" I asked.

"Yes, they went first to one shop, and then to another."

"It is very terrible," I replied, and as I looked at the girl I felt how much she must have suffered, and wondered

whether she, too, would end by joining the Nihilists, like so many of her sisters. Twenty years ago it was an acknowledged fact that there were ten times as many Jews among the ranks of Nihilism as there were Russians, Poles, or Germans. "The Jewish women in particular," wrote Tissot, in 1882, "bring a concentrated energy, a cold determination, to bear on their acts of revolution, that recall the Judith of the Apocrypha." The same writer was of the opinion that the majority of these Judiths came from Little and New Russia, "where the cornfields wave like the sea; where the fertile meadows nourish fat flocks; where the vine grows, and where the blood is warm." Yes, I felt that the young woman had reason to be indignant, and I did not think it was for me, a foreigner, to remind her that there are two sides to every question, and that the fearful massacres, which no Russian worthy of the name had ever wished to justify, were the outcome of evils that had been growing for more than one decade. I did not speak to her of the class of Jews who had settled like vampires year after year upon the poor, lazy, ignorant peasants; who, having got hold of all the capital, had enticed them into their liquor hells (till the Government stopped it) lent them money, and ruined them by the thousand.*

Presently the girl said: "Do you know any Hebrew? It is Hebrew, the language of our race, that my father and I have been talking."

"Really?" I replied, trying to look dubious; "it is remarkably like German."

"You are right," she replied, "and you would find Hebrew very easy if you knew German; there are so many words common to both languages. *Kinder*, for instance, is the word for children in both."

"Indeed?" I answered; "but when I take up Hebrew, I shall endeavour to study it in its purest form; such, for instance, as the language of the Scriptures; and I do not think you would find the word *Kinder* there."

* See Wahl, and many others on this subject.

"Perhaps not," she replied, shrugging her shoulders.

Among the postcards she showed me there was one with a portrait of Poushkin, and a picture of a cottage in which he had resided when at Kisheneff.

"Did Poushkin stay long in this neighbourhood?" I asked, and I began to wonder where that itinerant poet had not resided.

"Yes, a good while," she replied; "but you don't mean to tell me you have not read his biography?" (in a tone of horror).

"I have still many Russian books to read," I replied, evasively. "It has cost me much labour to acquire the language; you must have noticed that I do not yet speak it fluently."

"Ah!" she exclaimed, and then added: "Are you going to publish an account of your travels?"

"I should like to do so," was my reply.

"Have you your card with you?" was her next rather abrupt question, and on my answering in the affirmative she added: "Please give me one; I shall read your book."

Her father here laughed sarcastically, and reminded her that she would have to learn English first.

"It is certain to be translated," she said, and she eagerly seized the card I handed her.

Thus ended my first conversation with a Kisheneff Jewess. It had interested me much to see her brother, who was also afflicted with the family squint, enter the shop at an early stage in our conversation, and listen with quivering interest to every word that passed. These people are not asleep.

I left that shop with a feeling of greater sympathy and interest in the Hebrew race than ever. Russia must not drive her Jews away, nor must she try to stop their advance, or turn them into Nihilists. They are a necessary element to her own prosperity. They are like a sharp tool, indispensable to the skilled workman, but ready to cut like a razor if not handled properly. Take away the Jews from Kisheneff, and the town will cease to exist; take them

away from Odessa, and you take away the chief cause of her rapid growth and commercial prosperity; take them away from Kieff, and you sap her life blood.

I was told by the Russians of Kisheneff that, after the onset upon the Jews, the governor and every official under him down to the police, were *versetzt*. The present governor is so favourably disposed towards the Israelitish community that the Lutherans of the place call him a *Judenfreund*. Here is a story that I heard from the lips of a Russian German residing in Kisheneff: A certain Pastor L——, belonging to the Lutheran church in Russia, who had always felt a particular interest in the welfare of God's chosen people, was convinced, after much meditation and heart-searching, that he had received a call to devote the remainder of his life to mission labours among the Jews. After further consideration he decided to make Bessarabia the scene of his activities, and accordingly he settled there. But after several years of work, he became so disgusted by the peculiar vices of the Bessarabian Hebrew, that he abandoned his intention of devoting to them the rest of his days on earth, and returned once more to the work of a pastor among his own people. He never afterwards referred to his residence in Bessarabia without alluding to it as the mistake of his life.

Kisheneff is the fortunate possessor of some fine sulphur springs, and steps have already been taken towards the erection of a handsome sanatorium, the chief attraction of which will be its sulphur baths. A new museum, built in the Moorish style, was opened in the autumn of 1904, and other public buildings are in course of erection. The climate alone is attracting more Russian residents every year, and if only the Jews are treated as they should be, the good fortune of Kisheneff will certainly be assured. A few hours' journey by rail brings the residents of Kisheneff to the Hungarian frontier. They are allowed to cross the boundary if they give their names to the police, and may stay for twenty-four hours, but not longer, without obtaining a foreign passport. Many Russians are thus enabled

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Bessarabian peasants, Kisheneff.

A native of Bessarabia at Kisheneff.

Peasant women on the road to Kisheneff.

Bessarabian cottages.

[*To face page* 369.

to visit the Carpathians, and make a passing acquaintance with the Danube.

The Russian peasants round Kisheneff are well off as compared with those of other parts; they only suffer want when the harvest is bad through insufficiency of rain. One even finds them occasionally travelling second class. It is true that the peasants of Perm, on the Kama, are yet more prosperous, but Perm is on the borders of Siberia—a land where the peasants actually grow rich. Between Ekaterinburg,* in the Urals, and Perm, no Russian, who believes that cleanliness is next to godliness, dares to travel second class, for the carriages are always packed with peasants whose garments poison the air, but whose pockets contain money.

Many of the better streets of Kisheneff are lined with acacias, which are glorious when in bloom. Grapes ripen out of doors nearly as well as they do in the Crimea. We saw an almost completed triumphal arch and a tribune in one of the streets, and learned on enquiry that it had been raised in September, 1904, in honour of an anticipated visit of the Emperor, the arrangements for which, for some reason or other, had been cancelled. The morning train from Kisheneff to Odessa carried us thither in a little less than five hours. The train was not overheated, and we and two Russian gentlemen had a luxurious saloon carriage to ourselves. The Emperor himself could not have taken the journey with more comfort.

* See Chapter XVIII.

CHAPTER XXIX.

KIEFF.

Isolation of Kieff—Origin and early history—Nestor—St. Andrew and Russian baths—Nestor's account—Olga—Chief events in her life—Gibbon—Karamsin—Wholesale baptism—St. Sophia's—Local historians—Mistaken idea of its size—Its cupolas—Description of the edifice—Mosaics—Frescoes—Extraordinary frescoes on the staircase—What remains of Ancient Kieff—The Golden Gateway—The Cathedral of St. Vladimir—The Church of St. Andrew—The university—The Botanical Gardens—A Kieff industry—The "Kieff Jordan"—Pilgrims—The lavra—Its history—Entombed alive—The catacombs—A famous ikon—Printing—The monastic inn—Wealth of the lavra—A cell—The streets of Kieff.

AFTER Novgorod there is surely no spot in Russia more fascinating to the student of that country's history, sacred or profane, than the town of Kieff, standing upon her three hills with the river Dnieper running at their base, and surrounded by a vast plain stretching for miles in every direction; a plain which, according to geologists, was once entirely covered by the sea. Kieff may be reached from Vienna by express train in two nights and one day; at the present moment it takes exactly the same number of hours to get there from St. Petersburg as it does from Vienna, but a new and more direct line is in course of construction. The town lies in the same latitude as Brussels, but its continental position insures it a very different climate from that of the Belgian capital. A glance at any map of Russia will show the complete isolation of Kieff from all her sister towns of equal size and importance. Tradition tells us that before the Christian era she was a commercial centre, and this, from her position, she must always continue to be. Her river, the Dnieper, rises in

the government of Smolensk and, after a southern course of some thousand miles, falls into the Black Sea by several mouths, in the neighbourhood of Kherson. This river plays an important part in the early history of Kieff under the name of Borysthenes; derived, according to Levesque, from the Slav words *bor*, a pine forest, and *stena*, a wall, and signifying "wall formed by a forest of pines." The Greeks knew nothing of its source, but Herodotus imagined it to be the greatest river in the world after the Nile, while in reality it could never have been navigated by any but flat-bottomed boats, such as those in which the Russians floated down its waters to attack Constantinople in the year 860. The earliest history of Russia in existence emanates from Kieff, from the so-called chronicle of Nestor, which covers a period from the second half of the ninth century to the early years of the twelfth. Leger, who translated it into French, says that it is not, as is generally believed, the *first;* since that of the monk Jacob preceded it. Jacob's chronicle, however, is thought to have been written more for the entertainment of the reader than for the facts chronicled, and is full of impossible dialogue. Nestor was a monk of Kieff, and it was at the Kieff Lavra that his writings were preserved. He wrote, besides the chronicles in question, the biography of Theodosius and those of two other saints—the earliest biographies in the Russian language.* Leger tells us that Nestor began to write before 1091, and that as the chronicle bearing his name was written towards the end of the twelfth century, some other monk must have been the author; but Professor Bury, in a note to his edition of Gibbon, says that Nestor lived in the latter half of the twelfth century, and *might* have compiled the chronicle in 1115; that year, however, is given as the date of his death by Russian writers.† No translation of Nestor's chronicle has appeared in English,

* See Chapter XX. for the story of Theodosius.

† "Among Nestor's sources," writes Professor Bury, "I find written and dated notices preserved at Kieff beginning with A.D. 883, the year in which the centre of the Russian realm was transferred from Novgorod to Kieff."

though we occasionally find quotations from it in historical works. In 1868 Leger chose as the subject of a thesis for his Doctor's degree, "*De Nestore rerum russicarum scriptore.*" In 1869 he began to study Danish, in order that he might read a Danish translation of Nestor, which appeared in Copenhagen in that year, and compare it with his own, which he had made direct from the original—written in the ancient Slav language; he did not publish his own till 1884. It begins thus:—*

"Here are some facts of ancient history related by the monk of the monastery of Theodosius of the catacombs; how Russia was formed; who was the first prince to reign at Kieff; and where Russia had her beginning. Let us begin. After the Flood, the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japhet—divided the earth between them." He then gives a careful account of the division, and the story of the Tower of Babel, after which he goes on to say that among the sixty-eight nations that arose after the Flood the first and foremost was the Slav realm of the race of Japhet, and he enumerates all the Slav tribes.† Then he describes "the road that leads from Russia to Rome by way of the Dnieper," and tells the tradition of St. Andrew. "St. Andrew, the brother of the apostle Peter, had come to Kherson, and, wishing to go to Rome, he went up the river Dnieper. Now he halted by chance at the foot of the hills that are on its bank (where Kieff now stands). The next day he said to his disciples who were with him, 'Behold these hills! the blessing of the Lord shall rest upon them; a great town shall rise here, and God will build there many churches.' He then went up and placed a cross upon them. From thence he went on to Novgorod. He noticed the Slav people and their customs,—how they bathed, and how they beat themselves in bathing, and

* I have translated this from the French version.

† "There is a pedigree in the notes to 'A Chronicle of London from 1089 to 1483,' page 183, edition 1827, in which the history of the bishops of London is traced back, not only to the migration of Brutus from Troy, but also to Noah and Adam." See Buckle's "Civilisation in England."

he was astonished. On reaching Rome he recounted what he had seen. 'I saw strange things in the Slav country,' he said. 'I saw baths* built of wood; these were heated to a great heat, and the people stripped and entered them. They threw hot water over their bodies, and beat themselves with pliant birch twigs, till they hardly came out alive; they then threw cold water over themselves, and thus recovered consciousness. They do that every day. No one imposes this torture upon them, they do it of their own free will. They do it to bathe themselves, not with a view to torture.' All who heard these things were astonished, and St. Andrew returned home."

Then comes the story of the founding of Kieff: "There were three brothers, who lived each with his own family in a separate dwelling, and the number of these brothers was three. Their names were Kii, Schlehek and Koriv. Kii established himself on the hill at whose foot now flows the river Borytch. Schlehek established himself on the hill which is now called Schlehekovitza and Koriv on the one now called Korivitza. Together they formed a city which they called Kieff—or the city of Kii—after the eldest brother. And round the city was a great forest, and they occupied themselves in chasing wild beasts. Their families were good and industrious, and they called themselves Polianes. . . . They retained the refined manners of their ancestors, they showed respect for their daughters-in-law, and for their sisters, and for their mothers, also for their mothers-in-law, and for their brothers-in-law. The other races were much more savage."

We have given elsewhere the story of how Igor,† the

* Herodotus tells us how the Scythians bathed: "The Scythians, as I have said, take some of this hemp seed (which he has been describing), and creeping under the felt coverings (of a tent) throw it upon the red-hot stones; immediately it smokes, and gives out such a vapour as no Grecian vapour-bath can exceed. The Scyths, delighted, shout for joy, and this vapour serves them instead of a water-bath; for they never by any chance wash their bodies with water." See Rawlinson's "Herodotus," 1875.

† See chapter on Novgorod.

son of Rurik, became master of Kieff, and of how, after he had been murdered by the Drevlianes, his young son Svatoslav was brought up under the guardianship of his mother, Olga. Olga's history is interesting, and as she was eventually canonised and became one of the most important of the legendary characters in Russian history, we will turn to the chronicle of Nestor for an account of some of her doings: "When Igor had been killed by the Drevlianes, and his wife Olga was at Kieff with her son, the young Svatoslav, the Drevlianes said, 'We have killed the Russian prince, let us marry his widow to our own prince Mal, then we can take Svatoslav and do what we like with him.' And the Drevlianes sent twenty of their bravest men by boat to Olga. They landed near the Boritchev—for at that time the water ran close to the foot of Kieff, and no one lived down in the valley, but everybody lived on the hill. Now, outside the town itself, and behind the temple of the Mother of God, was the palace of the dungeon, so called because it was built with a stone dungeon. And it was told Olga that the Drevlianes were come, and Olga called them to her, and said: 'My good friends, what has brought you hither?' And they replied, 'The Drevlianes have sent us to you, saying, "We have killed your husband because he was like a wolf in the way he pillaged and ravaged our country, but our princes are good, and bring prosperity to the land of the Drevlianes. We pray you therefore to become the wife of Mal, our prince."' And Olga replied: 'Your proposal pleases me; I cannot bring my husband to life again, but I wish to do you honour in the presence of my people. Return now to your vessel, and do the grand; make a show of being proud and haughty. And when I send to fetch you to-morrow, say, "We will not go to her on foot, neither will we go on horseback, but we will be carried into her presence in our own boat." Then they will carry you seated in your own boat.' And Olga caused a wide and deep pit to be dug in the court of the dungeon outside the town. The next day she sent messengers to fetch the ambassadors, but they replied

as she had commanded them, and said, 'We will not go on horseback, we will not go on foot. Carry us in our own boat.' And Olga's servants replied, 'We must do as you bid us, for our prince is dead, and our princess wishes to marry your prince.' So they were carried in the boat, sitting up full of pride in their long robes. The people carried the boat to Olga's palace, and then threw them, boat and all, into the deep pit. Olga leaned over the edge and said, 'How do you like the honour I have done you?' And they replied, 'This is a worse death than we gave to Igor.' And then she ordered that they should be buried alive. And it was done. Then Olga sent messengers to the Drevlianes, saying, 'Send me some of your great men, so that I may be brought to your prince in a fitting manner, or else the people of Kieff will never let me come.' Then the Drevlianes picked out their greatest men—the governors of their country—and sent them to fetch Olga. When they arrived, Olga ordered a bath to be prepared for them, and she said, 'When you have bathed you shall come into my presence.' So the bath was heated, and the Drevlianes went in and began to bathe themselves. Then the door was shut, and Olga gave orders that the bath should be made very hot, and they were all steamed to death. Then Olga sent to the Drevlianes, and said, 'See, I am now coming to you. Prepare plenty of hydromel in the town where you killed my husband. I wish to weep at his tomb, and perform funeral rites in his honour.' So they gathered together a great quantity of hydromel, and Olga came, followed by a small escort, and taking off her fine robes, she advanced towards her husband's tomb; she wept over it, and ordered her servants to raise a great tumulus. When the rites were concluded, the Drevlianes sat down to drink, and Olga ordered her attendants to serve them. Then the Drevlianes said to Olga, 'Where are the great men we sent to fetch you?' and she said, 'They are coming presently,' and when the Drevlianes were quite intoxicated, she ordered her attendants to fall upon them and massacre them. And having given the order, she

departed. And Olga returned to Kieff, and prepared an army to go out against what was left of the Drevlianes. Then Olga and her son Svatoslav gathered together a large and valiant army, and they marched against the Drevlianes. After that, there was a great battle, and the Drevlianes fled and shut themselves up in their stronghold. Olga then attacked the town of Isk, for it was there that her husband had been killed; she advanced toward the town, and the Drevlianes having shut themselves up in it, defended themselves with great energy; for they knew what would be their fate if they surrendered. And Olga was before the town a whole year without being able to take it. Then she thought of a plan. She sent messengers to the town saying, 'On what are you relying? All your fortresses have surrendered and are paying tribute, the peasants are cultivating their fields, and you alone refuse to pay tribute, do you wish to die of hunger?' And the Drevlianes replied, 'We will willingly pay you tribute, but what you want is to avenge your husband.' And Olga said, 'I have already avenged my husband, twice when you came to Kieff, and once when I performed the funeral rites in his honour. I have avenged him enough, but I wish to receive a small tribute from you, and when peace has been established I shall return home.' The Drevlianes replied, 'What do you want? We will gladly give you honey and skins.' And Olga said, 'I ask but one little thing of you; give me, according to the number of your houses, three pigeons and three sparrows for each house. I shall be satisfied with that, for I know that you have been impoverished by the siege.' The delighted Drevlianes complied with Olga's request, and Olga said, 'Now that you have been humbled before me and my son, go back to your town, and I shall go away to-morrow and return to Kieff.' Then the Drevlianes returned joyfully to their town, and the news they brought filled the townspeople with pleasure. And there was great rejoicing. Then Olga gave to each of her soldiers one of the pigeons and one of the sparrows. And she commanded

each man to tie a little piece of bread dipped in sulphur to the wing of each bird, and the bread was to be wrapped in a little bit of cloth. And when it was getting dark Olga ordered the soldiers to let loose the pigeons and sparrows. The birds all flew back to their nests in the besieged town, the pigeons to the pigeon-holes, and the sparrows to the eaves of the houses. Thus the dovecots, and the huts, and the towers, and the stables were all set on fire, and not one escaped. It was impossible to extinguish the flames, because all the buildings were on fire at the same time. Then the people rushed out of the town in their despair, and Olga ordered her soldiers to take them captive. Some were put to death, others were reduced to slavery, and the remainder had to pay a heavy tribute. Two parts of the tribute were sent to Kieff, and one part to Olga's own town, Vychgorod; and Olga established laws and taxes in the land of the Drevlianes. You can to this day see some of her palaces and her hunting-grounds. And Olga returned to Kieff and stayed there a whole year. . . . In the year 948 Olga visited Constantinople. The Emperor at that time was Constantine, the son of Leo. The Emperor saw that she was very beautiful and very clever. He admired her intelligence and liked to talk with her. 'You are worthy to reign with me in this town,' he said. Hearing these words, Olga said, 'I am a pagan. If you wish me to be baptised, baptise me yourself, otherwise I refuse to be baptised.' And the Emperor baptised her, with the help of the patriarch. As soon as she had been baptised, Olga's mind became enlightened, and the patriarch instructed her in the faith, and gave her his blessing. She knelt with her head bent before him, and absorbed his instruction as a sponge absorbs water. They gave her in baptism the name of Helena,* after the mother of Constantine the Great. After Olga had been baptised, the Emperor said to her, 'I wish to marry you.' 'What! you wish to marry me

* Helena was a British princess, the daughter of Coel II., prince of the Trinobantes. Most of us have seen her sarcophagus in the Vatican sculpture gallery.

after baptising me and calling me your daughter?' she replied. 'You know very well that such a thing would be contrary to the Christian law!' But the Emperor replied, 'Olga, you have deceived me.' He then loaded her with presents, and she returned to Kieff." Nestor winds up this part of his narrative with the remark that it was like the story of the Queen of Sheba coming to see Solomon.*

Many an interesting account has come down to us of how the Russians of Novgorod came sailing down the Dnieper to Constantinople by way of Kieff. Each warrior started out in his own canoe, made of the trunk of a mighty tree. But the timber of the canoes was fashioned into boats with benches and oars before the fleet started out on the longer and harder part of the journey, and when they came to the falls below Kieff they had to get out and drag their boats overland for a distance of about six miles. This was the most dangerous part of the whole journey, for robbers sometimes fell upon them and robbed them of the hides, honey and furs, which they were carrying with them as a means of barter. If they managed to reach Constantinople in safety they exchanged their treasures for corn, wine and oil, for the manufactures of Greece, and the spices of India.† Recent historians are agreed that the first of these expeditions took place in A.D. 860, more than a hundred years before Olga's conversion to Christianity. That queen firmly persisted in her new religion, but she was unable to convert to it either the members of her own family or her subjects at large. The nation preferred the gods of their fathers, and remained obstinately faithful to the idol Peroun, sacri-

* See Leger's note to this story: "The visit took place in 957, as is attested by several Byzantine writers. The demanding of a princess of seventy years of age by an emperor who was already married can be relegated to the rank of a fable." (The Byzantine writers called her Elga, which, in ancient Norse was Helga; modern writers affirm that she was baptised at Kieff. Indeed, the exact spot where the baptism took place has been pointed out to me.)

† See Gibbon's account of these expeditions: "In their first enterprise, under the princes of Kieff, they passed without opposition, and occupied the Port of Constantinople, in the absence of the Emperor Michael, the son of Theophilus."

ficing human victims in its honour. "In the choice of a victim," wrote Gibbon, "a citizen was preferred to a stranger, a Christian to an idolater." This passage indicates that Olga was not entirely without supporters in her own country, and that the Greek missionaries had made some converts. There is a fragment of an account of the conversion of the Russians to Christianity still preserved at Paris, and the two pages which Gibbon has devoted to the subject are simply an elegant paraphrase of its contents. Karamsin does not follow it so blindly, he is content with giving a literal translation in a note to his chapter on the subject. It seems that the ambassadors, or merchants, who made their way from Kieff to Constantinople, compared the barbarous idolatry of their own people with the splendour of the services of the Greek church. They seem to have been overawed by the wonderful edifice of St. Sophia, by the gorgeous ikons, by the riches of the altars, and the number and vestments of the priests. The music, too, impressed them most favourably, also the order and pomp of the ceremonies. The priests persuaded them that angels came down from heaven to join the choir, and any feeling of repugnance they may have felt for Christianity now disappeared. Vladimir, the son of Svatoslav and the grandson of Olga, was the first Russian prince to embrace the Greek faith; he did so mainly because he wished to marry the sister of the Roman emperor, but also with a view to uniting all his subjects by means of one satisfactory religion. If we may believe Nestor, he had at one time contemplated becoming a Mohammedan, and at another, a Jew, but had relinquished the idea of the former when he found that as a follower of Mahomet he would not be allowed to drink wine; and the latter, when he learned that the Israelites, on account of their sins, were wanderers on the face of the earth. I have already described in another chapter* the church of Chersonese, built upon the spot where Vladimir's baptism is supposed to have taken place. A

* See Chapter XXIII.

book, dealing with the subject, which is now for sale in the shops of Kieff, says that Vladimir returned to Kieff in 988, and that his first public act as a Christian ruler was to utterly abolish the worship of idols throughout the length and breadth of his land. To show his recently acquired horror of the idol Peroun, the worship of which he had himself introduced into Novgorod,* he ordered that it should be tied to a horse's tail, and publicly dragged through the streets, and then hurled from the highest part of the town into the river below. After that the twelve sons of Vladimir, by a previous marriage, were baptised. History does not tell us what became of his Russian wives, the number of whom, according to Nestor, was eight hundred; he issued an edict to the effect that anyone who refused the rites of baptism would be treated as an enemy. The Metropolitan Michael, and a few other priests, whom he had brought with him from Chersonese, undertook to baptise the whole population. They had little difficulty in converting the people of Kieff, but in the more distant parts of the realm they met with stubborn resistance, and it was not till two hundred years later that the Christian religion became firmly established.†

The cathedral of St. Sophia at Kieff, which was begun at the command of Vladimir by Greeks brought from Constantinople for the purpose, is still standing and in good repair. Hundreds of travellers come every year to see it from all parts of Europe. Local historians tell us that when Olga returned from Constantinople she brought with her a miracle-working wooden cross, and, in order to keep it safely, she caused a small wooden church to be erected where St. Sophia's now stands. St. Sophia's was completed about the year 1037, during the reign of Yaroslav, and it is to the zealous piety of that prince that it owes its interesting mosaics. The outside of this church is not particularly attractive, for its walls are painted

* See Peredolsky's "Antiquities of Novgorod."

† For an account of the resistance met with, see my chapter on "Rostoff the Great."

a pale green and white, and its roof is the usual green colour, while four of its cupolas are green, and spangled with stars, and six surmounted by golden crosses. Its four-storeyed campanile is its most interesting feature, with its shining golden cupola, which towers above every building and every tree in Kieff, and can be seen for miles. I remember that when we were approaching Kieff from the direction of Poltava we could see that cupola from the train windows long before we were able to distinguish a single house. The fact that this cathedral was built in imitation of what is now the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople has led writers who have not seen it to form a somewhat erroneous impression of its size; it is really quite a small church, and—if I may borrow a method of comparison from Gautier—half a dozen Kieff Sophias could walk about in the one at Constantinople, campanile and all. Constant repairs and additions have almost hidden the oldest parts of the roof and walls. Several of the windows have been widened, but the interior is still dimly lighted. The central cupola has twelve sides, and the same number of windows; eight other cupolas, smaller, are six-sided, and many of them have no windows at all. The oldest cupolas are hidden by a modern iron roof. Archæologists say that if we could remove the iron roof and take away the cupolas that have windows we should then see St. Sophia's as it originally looked. The church was planned by Byzantine architects, and built with strong bricks of a light red colour, and thin layers of cement mixed up with powdered brick and small stones. In the walls, between the layers of bricks, were placed large stones; the walls and arches were joined together with iron bars; the arches between the columns, in the interior, were supported by means of oaken girders, which were sawn away not so very long ago. The cornices on the walls, pillars and columns inside are of a reddish material *argil fundamentalis rubra*, but very few of the outer decorations are left, and these are to be found round the windows of the upper storey. By the principal entrance to the west

are two white marble columns, which, it is evident, were once covered with arabesques. The open space round the church is strewn with broken bricks, some of them modern ones left by the workmen employed in restoring the walls, and others very old. In the year 1240 the Tatars attacked and took Kieff, but happily they did little damage to St. Sophia's, contenting themselves with carrying off the costly vessels of gold and silver and other portable treasures.

The chief relic to be seen in the edifice at present is a marble sarcophagus, supposed to be that of Yaroslav, which is reverently shown to every visitor. It is in two pieces—the lower part and the lid. Some have thought that the Tatars opened it and robbed it of Yaroslav's remains, but as the sarcophagus was placed with one-third of its width in a niche, and bricked up in that position, it could not have been opened without detriment to the frescoes, and these are intact.

But the glory of St. Sophia's is its mosaics, which are as old as the church itself. The half-dome behind the chief altar is ornamented with a gigantic figure of the Virgin Mary, which stands out vividly from a golden background and can be seen from every part of the church. The calm, gentle expression of the face is extremely pleasing; there is a sweetness about it which is rarely seen in mosaic pictures. The hands are raised in such a way as to signify unceasing intercession on behalf of this sinful world. The figure of the Virgin is arrayed in a Grecian tunic of dark blue with tightly-fitting sleeves reaching to the wrists, and gathered in slightly at the waist with a purple-coloured girdle, into which is tucked a little white handkerchief striped with gold and edged with long black fringe, in the centre of which is a golden cross, part only of which is shown in the mosaic. Over the head and shoulders, and folded across the bosom, so that one end hangs down behind the left elbow, is a graceful golden-coloured veil. So large a part of the drapery consists of this veil that some artists have given the mosaic the name of "the Virgin

with the draped veil." Her brow, the cuffs of the tunic, and her breast, are adorned with silver crosses, all the ends of each being of equal length. Her head is surrounded by a halo, and on either side of it are two of the four Greek letters composing her name. Her shoes, slightly ornamented with gold, are of the same purple colour as her girdle. She stands upon a square block of stone, represented by gold mosaic. Round the arch is written in Greek, "God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved." Unfortunately this wonderful piece of mosaic was touched up with oil-paint when the cathedral was being repaired. Archæologists who have examined it are all agreed that the enormous mosaic figure of the Virgin is as old as the wall it covers. The people of Kieff look upon it as a miracle-working ikon, and the women—Roman Catholics as well as Orthodox—go and pray to it on behalf of their children. The centre of the wall is adorned with a mosaic picture of the Last Supper. The table at which Christ is seated is covered with a purple cloth striped with gold. Upon the centre of the table lies a golden cross, and at each side of it stand drinking cups, pieces of broken bread and objects which appear to be meant for knives. Two angels hover above the table. The figure and face of Christ in this picture are greatly admired, but the apostles are not so good. The interior of the central cupola was originally covered with mosaics, and the entire flooring of the edifice was once gold mosaic. On the two pillars supporting the outer arch are also some interesting mosaics, but it would take too much space were I to enumerate them all, and I have yet a word to say about the frescoes, which, in their way, are quite as remarkable.

The frescoes that cover the walls of St. Sophia's are all of them very old; like the mosaics, they are as old as the church itself. For many generations they were concealed by a coating of plaster and whitewash, and in the nineteenth century no one knew of their existence till the year 1842, when a young artist, who had been sent

from St. Petersburg to make some drawings of the church, was informed by the sacristan that there were colours under the plaster on the walls. The artist, Solncheff by name, examined the small holes pointed out to him by the sacristan, and after gently removing a little more of the plaster was able to distinguish stars through the upper holes, and angels through the lower ones. After that every one who visited the church heard of the wonderful discovery and peeped through the holes; the report was not long in reaching the ears of the Governor-General, M. Bibikoff, who promptly formed a committee, with Philaret, the metropolitan, and several other influential persons, to discuss the desirability of removing the plaster, with the result that the work of uncovering the frescoes was soon begun, Solncheff having been appointed to superintend the work. Not one of the members of the committee had any knowledge whatever of archæology, or of fresco painting, even Solncheff was blissfully ignorant on these subjects. Added to this, most of the work was done during the artist's absence, and, sad to relate, by unskilled workmen. The result was, as can be imagined, disastrous. Terrible damage was done to many of the frescoes by the rough and wholesale way in which the plaster was removed by the simple workmen, who imagined that their duty consisted solely in cleaning the walls; they were actually seen to scrape them with iron spades. In 1848 an ikon painter was commissioned to restore the frescoes that had been laid bare, but after trying in vain to touch them up with glutinous colour, he gave up in despair. An old ikon-painting monk from the Lavra next tried his hand, but he met with no better results. Several other attempts were made by people who knew nothing about that kind of work, and who actually tried to give the frescoes a modern look, and bring them up to date. At last, in 1859, a priest named Jeltonojsky, who really knew how to do it, restored those of the frescoes that had not already been ruined by injurious processes, and left them as we find them to-day.

The above facts enable us to understand certain peculiarities and anomalies which would otherwise be very puzzling. In one place on the eastern wall, where the name of a saint had been scraped away by the workmen, a conscientious restorer has written the word "Moses."

The church was reopened in October, 1853, and an inscription in memory of the restoration of the frescoes was placed under the central arch. It contains the names of the governor-general, the metropolitan, and the artist, but not that of the restorer, Jeltonojsky. I have said that the frescoes were all carefully restored, but that is, with the exception of those in the chapel containing the sarcophagus of Yaroslav, which were left just as they were, by the express order of Nicholas I., who came to inspect the frescoes in 1843, before the restoration of them had commenced. "Our descendants will see these," said he, "and the sight will convince them that we have faithfully restored the rest, and not invented them." All who have had the good fortune to see the frescoes will agree that the command of Nicholas was a wise one, for some of them are so extraordinary that one might almost be tempted to imagine that they had been designed at some recent date, and for the amusement, rather than for the religious edification, of the public. Those that have not been restored date from the eleventh century for a certainty, and they must have been executed after the sarcophagus was bricked into the wall. Even these have been slightly restored. The grand prince Yaroslav died on February 9th, 1054, and the chronicle of Nestor says that the decoration of St. Sophia's was completed by the year 1037. It follows, therefore, that if Nestor was right, the sarcophagus must have been bricked into the wall before Yaroslav's death, and was probably that of another member of his family.*

On the walls on either side of the staircase leading up to the gallery are to be seen the most extraordinary frescoes that have ever yet been found in a Christian church. To

* His wife was buried elsewhere.

begin with, the subjects they illustrate are secular, as far as anyone has ever been able to interpret them. Those about which there can be no doubt represent: a mounted warrior driving his spear into the breast of a pursuing bear; horses galloping; a long-haired and hatless huntsman spearing a wild boar while his hound springs at its neck; a peasant armed with a hatchet defending himself against a devil with the head of a bird and a man's body; a man wearing a turban hurrying along with the ham of a wild boar (surely not a Mohammedan!); actors, or acrobats, dancing on the stage round a sort of punch and judy box to the music of a flutist who capers as he plays; musicians performing a concerted piece, with an acrobat swarming up a pole in the background and two of the audience seated on the stage making gestures of rapturous delight; a man looking out of a prison window; a hawk swooping down and getting its claws into the back of a crouching hare; an elk with one leg struck off (by the huntsman) and limping on the other three; a griffin standing on a snake; a musician playing on a kind of mandoline—all these, besides fishes and many unrecognisable animals, and legendic birds perched on strange trees. The great interest of these frescoes lies in the fact that everything depicted is ancient in form—the dress of the men, the weapons they are using, and particularly their musical instruments. The hair of the peasant, who is defending himself against a devil, is cut exactly as one sees it all over Russia in the present day, and his tunic and top-boots are also quite up-to-date; the form of his hatchet is not unlike that of the palæolithic hatchet preserved in spirit in the museum at Copenhagen. The walls round the gallery to which the staircase leads are adorned with scenes taken from the New Testament, such as the marriage at Canaan. But how, we naturally ask, have the non-biblical frescoes got into the church? No one knows. It has been suggested, however, that the staircase was originally part of Yaroslav's palace, and served simply to connect it with St. Sophia's, without being in any other

way connected with the sacred edifice. As I have said before, all the frescoes and all the mosaics of St. Sophia's date from the eleventh century, but in a church in the village of Berestoff, just outside Kieff, there are frescoes dating from the tenth century, while those recently restored in the church of the Merejovsky monastery at Pskoff are copies of still earlier work.* But the frescoes of St. Sophia's are the original frescoes of the original church. We know it by the drawing of the figures, by the drapery and shape of the garments, and by the colours employed. The whole of the interior of the church is covered with frescoes and mosaics, and in twenty-six cases the Greek inscriptions round them are still readable—the names of the saints, and texts of scripture relating to the biblical subjects depicted. There are five hundred and thirty-five full-length figures, and three hundred and forty-six with head and shoulders, and in the thirty fresco paintings there are no less than a hundred and twenty-seven figures. On the walls of the passages, in addition to the above, there are thirty-three paintings, containing one hundred and thirty-three figures. There is no doubt that the whole of the exterior was once as thickly coated with frescoes as the interior.

Unlike most of her contemporaries, Kieff was not surrounded by a stone wall. This fact was proved in 1883 when the ancient ramparts were dug away and not a single stone that could have belonged to a wall was discovered, though there were plenty of traces of temples and cemeteries. There was, however, at the entrance of Yaroslav's city, a massive gate, the ruins of which are the only bit of ancient Kieff that has not disappeared—the Golden Gateway. It is mentioned in Nestor's chronicle; it had high stone walls, very thick and very strong. A church with a golden cupola was built above the arch. The doors of the gateway were of brass covered with gold. The Tatars carried off these doors as a memento of their triumphal entry into Kieff. In the walls of the gateway

* See chapter on Pskoff.

there were strong chambers for the storing of corn, and others for sentinels to shelter in. When one of Yaroslav's churches was being built, that prince commanded that the money for paying the builders should be brought in carts from the Golden Gateway. A drawing of this gateway, made in 1651, which was found among the papers of Stanislaus Augustus, of Poland, shows that it had then several storeys standing. We read in the annals that in 1682 the walls were strengthened with iron bars, and that there was a moat and a drawbridge. There is very little left of the gateway to-day, but the ruins are looked after with jealous care, and no visitor to Kieff should forget to visit them. They are not far from St. Sophia's.

The "Apostle of the True Faith," the grand prince Vladimir, was thought to deserve some monument of exceptional splendour in Kieff—the Russian Mecca,—so the foundation-stone of a cathedral to bear his name was laid by the metropolitan, in the centre of the Vladimirsky Square, on June 15th, 1862. The best architect of the Byzantine style in Russia had been commissioned to prepare the plan, and he chose as his model a church at Constantinople dating from the year 996, with thirteen cupolas. But want of funds caused many alterations to be made, in order to reduce the cost; and amongst other things the size of the cupolas was greatly reduced. In 1866 the walls were ready for the roof, but, as they had been built too thinly and the foundations were not sufficiently deep, cracks began to appear. The remedying of these evils took time, and that part of the work was not completed till 1882. It was about the same time that the building committee got the idea that the interior ought to resemble as closely as possible the church in which Vladimir was supposed to have been baptised at Chersonese;* fresh alterations were accordingly introduced, and large sums of money were spent with this laudable object in view. From that time the government allotted a large sum annually to the expenses of the

* See Chapter XXIII.

building. The cathedral of St. Vladimir was opened by Nicholas II., in August, 1896, and all Russia went to Kieff to see the ceremony. It stands in the pleasantest and most picturesque part of the town, and is considered by competent judges to excel, not only St. Isaac's Cathedral at St. Petersburg, but even St. Saviour's at Moscow, in the beauty and richness of its paintings, although far greater sums were expended upon each of these. The cost of St. Vladimir's is estimated at nine hundred thousand roubles. Many of the paintings represent scenes from the life of St. Vladimir, the most striking of which are a couple of ikons, representing respectively the baptism of Vladimir and the wholesale baptism of the people of Kieff; in the latter, men, women and children have crowded into the water, which reaches to the shoulders of some, while others appear to be swimming. The priests, who have come from Constantinople for the purpose, are having a busy time of it, baptising each person separately. Vladimir, in crown and regal robes, stands upon a stone step by the water's edge with his hand held high in benediction. To the right, on entering the church, there is a really beautiful wall-painting of the Raising of Lazarus, a speaking picture, and one that attracts every eye. A colossal ikon of the Virgin and Child fills the half dome behind the High Altar. The Virgin's sandalled feet rest upon floating clouds, and a choir of cherubim, or rather cherubic heads, with outspread wings, float on either side of her with open mouths and rapturous looks. Notwithstanding these heavenly creatures, and the clouds, this is the most human representation of the Mother of God, as the Russians call the Madonna, that I have ever seen. The Child, with its chubby arms outstretched as if to grasp some bright object that has attracted it, is snugly encircled in its Mother's strong arms, while the flutter of her garments and position of her feet give the idea that she is stepping energetically forward. In the paintings of the Greek church the Virgin is never represented as young and childlike, but always as a woman—a protecting mother. So great is the

number of paintings and ikons that it is impossible to count them. There is, upon the walls of this cathedral, a whole series of ikons representing the Russian princes who have been canonised; and amongst them has been placed Nestor, the annalist, but for whose lively quill the saintly acts for which these princes are thus honoured would have, half of them, been long forgotten. I shall make no attempt to describe the wealth of shining gold and silver and bronze ornamentation with which every inch of available space on the walls, doors and arches is crowded; it is better left to the imagination. The building is lighted at night by electricity, and in order that the effect of the light upon the paintings may be soft, the glass of the lamps is of the palest yellow; but by day wax candles are lit in the enormous candelabra. Russians are proud of this cathedral of St. Vladimir, and look upon it as a unique symbol of a great religion, uniting a great people.

There is one other church in Kieff that impressed itself upon my memory, the church of St. Andrew the Apostle, who, according to Nestor, was the real founder of Kieff; it stands upon one of the highest points in the town. The hill upon which it towers is like a high cliff overlooking the Dnieper, and the view from the enclosed parapet which surrounds the church is a very fine one; on the other side of the winding river you see the Jewish quarter of Kieff, and beyond that the steppe stretching for miles. There is always a breeze blowing round St. Andrew's, and the people of Kieff go and stroll there when they feel themselves in need of bracing air. The church, which was begun in 1744, is built in the florid rococo style of Louis XV., and covered almost entirely with silvered metal. It was consecrated in August, 1767. The parapet, which was built in 1845, is reached by fifty stone steps, and when you are there you feel rewarded for the climb by the view, even if you do not enter the church. There is a picture of the Last Supper behind the altar, which is attributed to the brush of Leonardo da Vinci; it is dried

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University of Kieff.

Monument of St. Vladimir, Kieff.

[*To face page* 391.

up and much cracked, and has been more than once retouched by church artists. A little piece of the coffin of St. Andrew, which is said to have been brought from Italy by a pious Russian gentleman in 1858, is preserved in a chest near the ikonostas. There is also a money-box, in the shape of a cross two feet high, into which pilgrims drop their kopecks. I was told that the priests are always emptying that money-box, and that quite a large sum of money accrues from these modest offerings. When I saw it the cross was nearly full of small copper coins, and many were dropped in by ragged worshippers as I stood there.

The university of Kieff was founded in 1837 and finished in 1842. It has a portico with eight columns, and its exterior is painted, at present, the colour of red brick. A student explained to me the cause of its strange redness—it had blushed, he said, and was still blushing, at the bad behaviour of the students. It was opened to students long before it was finished and shut again a few years later, that the work might be completed. For the first few years at least two-thirds of the pupils were sons of noblemen of Polish extraction. In 1839 it was closed on account of the revolutionary activity of the students, but it was again opened in 1840. In 1900 there were said to be two thousand students upon its books, and more than half of these were studying medicine.* The Medical Faculty at Kieff ranks next to those of Moscow and St. Petersburg. There is, besides the buildings in connection with the University, a fine chemical laboratory, a very large library, and an observatory. The library contains nearly three hundred thousand volumes, the collective value of which has been estimated at no less a sum than a million roubles.

The Botanical Gardens, which are the same age as the University, and were opened in connection with it, are a favourite resort with the people of Kieff during the summer months. Before the year 1850, sixty-three

* I heard from one of the professors that there were only 1,200 students in 1904.

thousand roubles had already been expended on them, under the direction of Professor Trautpfetter, who saw that by means of these gardens the people of the surrounding country might be taught many a useful lesson in fruit, flower, and vegetable gardening. From time to time he distributed cuttings and seeds of extraneous plants gratis amongst the people. The result of his efforts was that every branch of gardening in the surrounding country was soon raised to a higher level. The Government wished that the district of Kieff would devote more attention to the cultivation of vines, and vineyards had been planted for the purpose, but the soil of the locality chosen did not suit the vines; they died off, and the vineyards were closed. But Professor Trautpfetter planted vines in the Botanical Gardens in 1845, and met with great success. Several kinds of grape in particular did so well that fruit gardeners in the neighbourhood were tempted to follow his example, and at the present day vine-growing has become a flourishing industry. During the months of October and November the streets of Kieff are full of men and women, with market-baskets of small black or green grapes for sale. These grapes are quite as pleasant to the taste as those of the Crimea, though very different, and their price is almost as low. Apples and pears are also abundant during the autumn. But in reality, Kieff is more renowned for its preserved fruits than for its fresh ones. The conserves and candied fruits prepared here are sent all over Russia; they form one of the chief industries of the neighbourhood. English people would do well to take a lesson from the Russians in the making of preserves; they do not stir their fruit into an unrecognisable pulp, but cook it in its natural shape, in its own clear syrup. What we call *jam* is never seen in Russia. But to return to the Botanical Gardens; it has been complained that not enough money is forthcoming for general expenses to allow of their full capabilities being properly developed, though the sum of six thousand roubles has been spent upon them annually for a long time

past; they have two fine chestnut avenues, which are filled with pleasure-seekers on summer evenings, and the *Orangerie*, which attracts many visitors, is filled with interesting exotic plants.

The museum of antiquities and art is an imposing pile, situated on another of the Kieff hills, and in quite another part of the town. A great number of steps lead up to its classic entrance, which is adorned with six Doric columns; but, once inside, the visitor can afford to take breath, and feel that his work is nearly over, as there is little that is worth seeing on the ground floor, for the simple reason that all the wonderful antiquities that have been dug up in the neighbourhood of Kieff have gone to the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. Never did I see such interesting golden bracelets, earrings, and necklaces as those found at Kieff; but I saw them at the Hermitage. There is, however, in this local museum at least one object of interest—a model of one of the tumuli opened near Kieff; it is cut in half to show exactly how the skeleton found in it had lain before it was disturbed. As for the upper storey of the museum, it is devoted to a collection of oil paintings by local artists, which visitors pressed for time would do well to avoid.

The chief street of Kieff—the Krestiatik—is named after the classic stream whose ancient course it is supposed by some to cover. It is a fine wide thoroughfare, with handsome seven, and eight storey business houses rapidly rising on either side. Every time I visit Kieff I note that many old buildings have been replaced by new, and those in course of construction bid fair to vie with the sky-scrapers of New York. New and comfortable hotels, with electric light and lifts, are being added every year, and there is far more real comfort to be found in the new hotels of this town than there is in the best of those of St. Petersburg or Moscow. When I visited Kieff for the first time, in 1896, there was not an hotel in the place fit for an English lady to stay in, but things are very different now.

The stream in which Vladimir caused his subjects to be baptised has long been dried up, but it was once deep

enough to be navigable near its mouth by small ships. It goes by various names, but the one by which it is best known is "Krestiatik." It had its source in a small lake, not far from the spot where St. Sophia's now stands, and ran down the steep hill-side, where the narrow Potchievsky Street now runs, to the foot of the hill, in a locality called the Podol, and fell into the Dnieper, where the gates of the Podol fortress are still to be seen. This stream has often been called the "Kieff Jordan," in memory of the event after which it has been named; it ran, according to some writers, along the course above described, as recently as the year 1700. It was in the mouth of the Krestiatik that the Greek ambassadors left their ships when they came to visit Olga, and it was on the banks of this stream that the first Christian church in Kieff—the church of St. Elias—was built. It was into the Krestiatik that Vladimir caused his former favourite, the idol Peroun, to be hurled, and it was from thence that it was dragged into the Dnieper. In those days thick forests covered its banks, and the water ran in a ravine or gully, which may still be recognised, though it has become a wide street, with the town gardens on its right. As for the trees which overhung it, these too are a thing of the past. In 1802 there was built, over the source of the Krestiatik, a little chapel, and its walls were covered with ikons. Through a hole in the floor of the chapel the sacred water is brought up in buckets, and cups are kept there for pilgrims to drink from. Above the chapel, there towers a column built of brick, surmounted by a golden cross rising out of a silver globe. This monument was practically rebuilt in 1865. The water of the spring contains much iron, and is said to cure inflammation of the eyes.

According to figures published at Kieff in the year 1900, two hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims visit the lavra and its churches every year between the end of April and the beginning of August; but all the year round there are pilgrims of the peasant class wandering through the streets, or kissing the ikons in the churches. The

history of the famous lavra which attracts so many pious people from every part of Russia, is given by various writers, but with regard to some facts they do not all agree. The favourite theory is that certain Varangians, who had wandered down to Kieff from the north, dug themselves, for protection against their enemies, underground dwellings in a hill overlooking the Dnieper, about a mile to the north of the ancient fortress of Kieff. The hill, which was composed mainly of sand and clay, was well suited for the digging of underground passages. In those days it was covered by a thick forest. About the time of the death of Vladimir, in 1013, a young man, born in 983, in the district now known as the government of Tchernigoff, wandered south and became a monk in a monastery on Mount Athos. After a time he came north again, and, while seeking a retreat in which he could end his days as a hermit, discovered the deserted underground dwellings of the Varangians, and took up his abode therein. The strife, however, which arose between the children of Vladimir after his death, drove the monk, who went by the name of Anthony, back to the monastery on Mount Athos, where he continued his austere life till Yaroslav became master of Kieff, and he could return thither in safety. He then made his home in a small underground dwelling at Berestoff, part of which, Illarion, the metropolitan of Kieff, had turned into a church when residing there as priest of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. Anthony's holy life and remarkable piety soon drew many followers and imitators around him. Nikon, his first follower, is said to have shorn the heads of the rest under the supervision of Anthony; their names are all given in the early histories of Kieff. One was Theodosius, who, as we have already seen,* fled from his home in Kursk, because his mother objected to the way in which he attempted to mortify the flesh. Thus was founded the first monastery in Russia. As time wore on, more and more followers flocked to Anthony from every part of the country.

* See chapter on Kursk.

There was no longer room for them in the first underground dwelling, so they dug other and larger ones, abandoning the first. Above their new home they erected on the hill a wooden church. In 1072 certain Greek monks joined them, and gave them instructions in church music; they also trained them in all the various duties and offices connected with monastic life; in fact they taught them everything a monk should learn, from reading to cooking. It is a gruesome idea, all these monks shut up in narrow, dark underground caves, dimly lit by artificial light, for the rest of their mortal lives. We are told that many of them were down there for thirty and forty years without seeing daylight, and that the ikons on the walls preserved them from the cold.* Their days were spent in continual fasting and unceasing prayer. Those who aimed at a high degree of sanctity shut themselves up in solitary niches, and lived half buried for the rest of their lives, subsisting on the food which was placed at the opening three times a week; but their less ambitious brothers met together for prayer and meals, allowing themselves a certain amount of bodily exercise and social intercourse. We are further told that if the monk whose duty it was to place food and drink at the openings of the niches where the hermits were immured noticed that the food remained untouched, he knew that the saintly spirit had at last fled to a better world and would have no further need of earthly sustenance. Monks who died thus were not disturbed, but simply walled in; while those who died in the ordinary way were put in coffins and laid in niches in the walls, in the same way as the early Christians were laid to rest in the catacombs of Rome. The lids of six of these coffins have been preserved to the present day, and the inscriptions upon them are still readable. It seems that when the Tatars took Kieff the entrances of these catacombs were sealed, and they never knew of the existence of living monks beneath their very feet. It was during the twelfth

* I know from experience that the winters of Kieff can be as severe, if not so long, as those of Moscow.

century that those catacombs were the most crowded. People seemed less anxious to become monks and hermits during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and we might venture to surmise that the air had become too foul. According to the annalists a great many more holy men ended their days there than those whose niches have been discovered, and it is very likely that the monks removed the inscriptions from the walled-up niches in order that enemies might not disturb their remains. It is thought, too, that the catacombs must have extended much further than they do at present, and that others may some day be discovered, the existence of which is at present unknown. The fact that Maria, the wife of one of the annalists, was buried here, and also a princess, Juliana of Tver, and that their tombs have not yet been found, points to the same conclusion. In recent years a good deal of money has been spent in widening some of the passages and bricking up the falling walls; great care has been taken to prevent the rain from penetrating the soil above them, also to prevent the springs inside them from overflowing and damaging them in any way. The lives of many of the hermits of these catacombs were written by contemporary monks and made into one volume in the fourteenth century. The book was published for the first time in 1635, in the Polish language, by the monks of the Kieff lavra. In 1661 it was printed in Slavonic; copies of it can now be purchased by visitors to the lavra at the price of three roubles and sixty kopecks.

On the hill in which the first cave monastery was hollowed there now stands a large stone monastery, with two churches;* one of these, the church of the Mother of God,

* Karamsin tells us that the Greek painters who had embellished the walls of the Kieff monastery with paintings taught their art to the diligent and disinterested saint Olympius, one of the Pechorsky monks, and that he painted pictures for the churches of Kieff without asking for any remuneration. "He paid back in pictures what he had borrowed in order to purchase colours." Olympius, who began to paint towards the close of the twelfth century, is the first Russian artist mentioned in history. "Kieff possessed," says Karamsin, "at this period a celebrated architect named Peter-Milonicus, who, besides building the monastery of Vorudubetsky, on the banks of the Dnieper, constructed a brick wall of such admirable workmanship that it was the marvel of all beholders."

was built in 1595, the other, the church of St. Anne, was built in 1679. The church of the Mother of God has a two-storeyed campanile, which was added in 1761.

It will be remembered that Anthony moved from the first catacomb in which he had settled into a much larger one. There he lived till the day of his death, and it is there that we find his tomb. At the present day there is very little left of the first catacomb, for part of it was destroyed by the building of a road leading to the chain bridge over the Dnieper. Two stone churches now stand above this catacomb; one of them, built in 1839, stands at the end of the gallery leading down to the catacomb, and the other, built in 1700, is exactly over the entrance. In the cell in which he dwelt is the silver shrine of Anthony, who, we are told, lived to the age of ninety. Fifty-six years of his life were passed underground, forty in the first, or, as it is now called, the Far Catacomb, and sixteen in the Near Catacomb. Besides the coffin of Anthony, there are some sixty-three others, containing the mortal remains of other hermits and monks, and amongst them that of Nestor the annalist.* On May 24th, 1853, the workmen who were engaged in putting up the chain bridge that crosses the Dnieper, discovered another branch of the catacomb, with inscriptions on its walls which proved that it dated from the eleventh century. One of the hermits of that time, who is known by the name of "Much-suffering John," dug a hole in the floor of his cell in the thirtieth year of his monastic life, and buried himself in the earth up to his shoulders. He remained six days in that position without eating or drinking, and then died. A figure representing him is still to be seen, with its head emerging mysteriously from the floor of the cell, and the ignorant pilgrims gaze at this spectacle with awe, believing that it is the saint himself, skin, bones, and all. Many of the saints lie in open coffins, with gold-embroidered clothes over their faces. Baron von Haxthausen, who visited the

* A gilded bronze tablet bearing an inscription was placed over it in 1826 by the Antiquarian Society of Moscow.

lavra in 1855, says that he saw the shrivelled but undecayed corpses of several of the saints when the priest who acted as his guide removed the cloths. But my own experience was less ghastly; when I first visited the catacombs, in 1896, I lifted the corner of one of the cloths myself, as my guide did not remove it for me, and found no corpse underneath it at all. My guide was very angry and refused to let me satisfy my curiosity with regard to the others. Baron von Haxthausen did not believe that Anthony and his followers could ever have dug those long passages, or would ever have thought of doing so, as a few small cells would have been all they would require. That distinguished traveller was convinced that they were either natural caves, or had been constructed by a former people.

The new Pechorsky monastery, or the lavra, is a collection of religious buildings surrounded by a high stone wall. The large church, which was built in place of one that had been burnt down, was consecrated in 1729. During the last five years it has been thoroughly restored at the cost of nearly a million roubles. It is a large church, with many coloured modern frescoes over the entrance; it contains one of the most revered of all the ikons of the empire—the miracle-working ikon of the Death of Our Lady. It is said to have been brought from Constantinople in 1073 by the builders of the first Pechorsky church, who had received it from the hands of the Mother of God direct. This wonderful picture received a hundred thousand kisses from the mouths of a hundred thousand worshippers every year—from pilgrims coming from every part of Russia. It is painted on cypress wood, now black with age. The Mother of God lies stretched upon her death-bed, and Christ and one of the apostles stand at her side; five apostles stand at her head, and five at her feet. Every line of the picture is pricked out with precious stones; every head has a halo of brilliants and an enormous diamond glitters above the head of Christ. The picture is in a gilded frame under glass. There used to be no glass over it, but since one of the pilgrims accidentally kissed

away the largest diamond, it has been thought advisable to protect the ikon from further loss. This I heard from the priest who took me round. The monastery connected with the church is a two-storeyed stone building, dating from the year 1842. I saw in the open space between it and the church a number of flat gravestones, and on one of these was inscribed the name of a nun who had distinguished herself by her piety in a convent close to the lavra. There are a number of smaller churches in the lavra group which I did not even attempt to enter. What interested me more was the printing-office, and the book-stall, displaying for sale to the pilgrims the books, pamphlets and tracts which the monks had themselves printed. I bought several little paper-covered books, and found them all to be the lives of hermits or saints, printed in large type and written in simple language. The printing-press must have been established in the sixteenth century, for there are volumes from it in the lavra library bearing the date 1608. There is also a hand-written catalogue of all the matter printed there up to the year 1744. The monks print quantities of hymn-books and prayer-books. The original printing-press has long since been replaced by a modern one, with the help of which a hundred and fifty million copies of one book are often turned out in a year. The sale of this religious literature brings in more than a hundred thousand roubles yearly. Russians prefer religious books printed at the Kieff lavra to those printed anywhere else, and there is a demand for them even in foreign countries where there are members of the Greek church; foreign booksellers who order them direct from the lavra get them post free.

Between the printing-office and the book-stall is the bakehouse, with a huge oven, where the church wafers are baked, with a little shop attached to it where wafers are sold to the pilgrims from the earliest hours of the morning to the singing of the last vespers. The price of the wafers varies according to their size, from one and a half to fifteen kopecks. On buying these little loaves the pilgrims write

upon them the names of absent friends for whom they wish to receive a blessing, they then take them into the church to be blessed by the officiating priest.

The lofty bell-tower beside the large church was begun in 1731 and finished in 1745. It is an octagonal tower. The tallest campanile in Russia is that of the fortress church of St. Peter and St. Paul at St. Petersburg, and this one comes next to it in height. That of the Uspensky cathedral at Kharkoff takes the third place, while the famous campanile of Ivan the Terrible in the Moscow Kremlin takes only the sixth place. The lavra campanile has four storeys, but it was originally intended to have five. In the top storey there is a striking-clock, and in the next below it is the far-famed peal of bells. The largest bell weighs a thousand puds (forty thousand pounds). Three hundred and seventy-four steps lead up to the belfry; from its balcony you can see to a distance of twenty-five versts; on a fine day all the suburbs of Kieff can be easily distinguished. In 1825 more than sixty thousand roubles were spent in putting the bells in order, and in 1878 the campanile itself was thoroughly repaired and its exterior freshly ornamented. The archimandrite, or head of the monastery, lives in a house just behind the campanile.

A little beyond the book-stall on the other side is the lavra hotel, at which pilgrims of the lower class can put up for a night or two when they have come a long way. The first inn which stood on this spot was built in the year 1058 for the self-same purpose. No charge is made for a lodging, but pilgrims are expected to put something into the box, according to their means. The present hotel was built in 1880. Monks do the cooking, waiting, and washing up, attired in long white aprons and white caps. There are fifty respectable-looking bedrooms, and some larger rooms for the reception of the poorer pilgrims,—not unlike some emigrants' bedrooms I once visited at Antwerp,—where each bed was intended to accommodate half a dozen people, and each room had two such beds. On the ground floor there is a restaurant, where you can get a wholesome

meal at the price of twenty kopecks (fivepence) a course. Very poor pilgrims are fed and housed gratis, to the number of two thousand, all through the summer, and even during the winter there are never less than three hundred. In the month of May there are more pilgrims in Kieff than at any other time of the year. During the last few years there have never been less than eighty-five thousand names entered on the hotel register during May. Since they have been able to reach Kieff by rail and steamboat the number of pilgrims has greatly increased. In connection with the hotel there is a hospital for sick pilgrims, which was built in 1842; the sight of the poor creatures standing round it on a fine day defies description.

There is a convent for women close outside the lavra, dating from the year 1638; it has sheltered from time to time many a lady of royal or aristocratic birth who has chosen to take the veil. Among others, the mother of Mazeppa ended her days here.

The wealth of the Kieff lavra is said to be enormous. I have seen the figures, but will not quote them. The sacristy is said to be the richest in the empire. From the earliest times it has been the custom for every Czar, or royal personage, who visits Kieff, to enrich the sacristy with some costly present. Once, however, there was an exception to this rule. It was in the time of war, and the Czar came to borrow money from the monastery. The monks lent him a large sum, and he gave them a receipt for it. He never returned the money, and some years after his death, when his son and successor paid a visit to Kieff, the metropolitan invited him to the lavra, and, receiving him in great state, presented him with a piece of paper on a golden salver. He looked at it, and recognised it to be an acknowledgment in his father's handwriting for the sum that had been lent. The young Czar accepted it with a gracious smile, and then, instead of handing the monks an order on the Treasury for the amount, as they had anticipated, he bowed to the metropolitan, and returning the paper said: "Thank you for

the generosity you have shown in offering me the most valuable treasure of which your sacristy can boast—my lamented father's own hand-writing. As for me, I can only imitate that generosity, and return to you a treasure of which I have not the heart to deprive you."

How well I remember my first visit to that richly-stored sacristy. "The jewels are superb! Be sure not to miss seeing the sacristy." These words haunted us as we wandered disconsolately round the lavra courtyard on a bright September morning nearly ten years ago. Monks young and old, with long hair, pale faces and shabby black robes were flocking into the great dining hall, but not a soul could we find to interpret our wants. We were tired and hungry, for we had spent a long morning in the catacombs and churches, but these jewels we were determined to see. Presently a message was brought us that after dinner a monk who could speak French (we did not then know Russian) would show us the sacristy; but we were not invited to the repast, and knew nothing of the monastic inn at which we could so easily have got a meal. There was a lobby with glass doors at the entrance of the dining hall; here we watched the monks comb their long hair before going in to dinner. Some wore ringlets, while others had apparently crimped their tresses, for they hung out in a bush; others, again, let their hair fall straight and lank behind their ears and over their shoulders; one or two had to unplait a thick pigtail before administering the comb. We looked in at the windows and saw long tables set with coarse ware and coarser bread; a plate of fish was ready before each seat. The only beverage was water. After dinner the French-speaking monk was brought to us. He was tall, and looked about thirty years of age; his face was very pale, but his bright brown eyes had a pleasant expression; he might have been good-looking but for that effeminate style of wearing the hair; his was dark and straight. An elderly divine of high monastic rank opened the sacristy doors, and a vast amount of wealth was displayed before our admiring eyes.

It was mostly in the form of jewelled crosses and pendants suspended on hooks in velvet-lined glass cupboards. One cross, about six inches in length and a quarter of an inch thick, was of solid gold, and studded all over with diamonds; another was covered with rubies, and one beautiful pendant was a mass of turquoises and pearls. We next inspected cupboards filled with gorgeous chasubles, the gifts of Russian princes and nobles. Every noble family in the empire was represented by a chasuble bearing the arms of the donor; they were mostly of rich velvet, embroidered with pearls and precious stones; some of them were entirely covered with gold embroidery, each stitch having a tiny pearl. Finally, they showed us rows and rows of sacramental cups, literally sparkling with gems. When we had seen all, the monk, noticing that we looked tired, asked us to come to his room and rest awhile. Curiosity as to what sort of a cell he inhabited led us to accept his offer, and we were soon seated in a comfortable study, the further end of which was fitted up as a bedroom and shut off by a high screen. Pictures of the Mother of God hung upon the walls, and the chief furniture of the room was a small American organ, the music for which lay scattered about on chairs and table. Our monastic friend readily complied with our request that he would play us a Greek anthem, but he first put before us a bunch of black grapes which, he said, had grown in the monastery garden which sloped down the hill towards the Dnieper. Whilst we were eating the grapes my eye fell upon a book which lay upon the table at my elbow, with a mark between its leaves. I could not resist reading the title; it was Zola's "Lourdes." When the monk had finished playing he began to ask us questions about England. "Have you any really fine cathedrals? Is it true that your priests tell the most ignorant of the people that they may pray direct to God for the forgiveness of their sins, without confessing to a priest at all? Do you think it possible that the very lowest can understand what God is?" He told us that he was much interested in shrines. "Have you any great

shrines in England?" he asked. We did our best to answer all these questions, and told him about Canterbury cathedral, and about Thomas à Becket. His bright eyes opened wide as he listened. We then asked if he was of Jewish extraction, for his name had led us to think so. "Oh dear no," he replied, "far from it; my father was a Cossack; he was killed in the Caucasian war. I should have been a Cossack officer myself, but my mother, thinking I was not strong enough, took me away from the military school when I was only fourteen; it was then that I learned to talk French. My mother decided that I should be a monk; so I finished my education at a monastic school. Even now I am not a full-fledged monk, but I shall be soon." He then escorted us to the gate, and seemed loth to let us go. As we were returning to the town, which was nearly a mile away, we met the metropolitan driving in state to the lavra. He had been holding a special service at St. Sophia's; there was a peal from the bells of every church as he passed it—the road is lined with churches—his closed carriage was drawn by four horses and there was one outrider.

Close to, and often on, the steps of the Kieff churches are booths, in which are displayed a great variety of *articles de religion*, such as minute gilded or silver lockets and rings, with ikons of saints or the Virgin; cheap rosaries of every description, ikons of all sizes painted on wood, and, most curious of all, medicine bottles tightly corked and sealed with a cross, in which are displayed various Scripture scenes, such as the Crucifixion, or the death of the Mother of God, composed of wood, paper and tinsel, which it must have taken the monks hours of dexterous handling to introduce through the narrow neck of the bottle. I paid the equivalent of sixpence for one of them. Pilgrims find this bottled form the most convenient one in which to carry a tinsel ikon from Holy Kieff to whatever distant spot may happen to be their home, for thus carried, the precious object is safe from the injuries of rain and damp.

Streams of pilgrims pour through the catacombs almost every day of the year. Everybody carries a taper purchased on the spot. A monk sits at the entrance to the first catacomb with a bowl of water, a huge paint-brush and a collecting-plate on the table before him, and, as each pilgrim bows low and contributes his or her mite, he sleepily jerks the brush out of the water on to the bowed head. I remember once seeing a pilgrim hand in a small basket, neatly covered with a cloth, and hearing him tell the monk as he did so that it contained a pat of home-made butter and a pot of honey from his own bees.

Just as the town of Kieff stands on three distinct hills, so it may be practically divided into three distinct parts. The university represents the intellectual, the lavra the religious, and the Podol, or Jewish quarter, the commercial part. And as he strolls along the principal streets the traveller is able to divide, at a glance, the bulk of the pedestrians into three classes. There are the students, unmistakable in their blue and grey uniforms, long unkempt hair and gold buttons; there are the black-robed, velvet-capped monks and the ragged pilgrims, with their staves; and there are, most numerous of all, the Polish* Jews, rich and poor, with their bright, intelligent faces and unmistakably Hebrew profiles. Military men are met with now and again, for Kieff has a military governor and a fortress manned with soldiers, but military uniforms are not a feature of the streets, as they are in St. Petersburg.

The inhabitants of Kieff have long sighed for a new railway station. The present one, built in 1870, is unable to satisfy the requirements of one of the most important towns of Russia. In 1904 a magnificent new station was to have been commenced; and it was in the autumn of that year that I overheard, in a bank, a portly commercial gentleman say to a foreigner who had met him there on business from a neighbouring empire: "Ah, we were to have had such a station here at Kieff that people would

* I found that half the books for sale in the principal bookshops were in the Polish language.

UNIV. OF
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The Dnieper at Kieff.

Old part of the Krestiatik, Kieff.

[*To face page* 406.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

have come from every part of the world to see it—so fine, so big, so comfortable, all decorated with white, and no draughts; but—this war——" and his voice rose to a high pitch with the last word. After a pause he continued: "It was to have been lit throughout with splendid electric lamps; the trains were to run lower than the platforms, so that you could step in without any climbing—*so* comfortable! And there was to have been a station of equal proportions built on the Champs de Mars at St. Petersburg, but now—we must wait."

Kieff abounds in uncomfortable little one-horse droshkies, which you can hire at the rate of forty kopecks an hour (ninepence). At Odessa the charge is fifty kopecks, at St. Petersburg sixty, and at Yalta seventy kopecks an hour. Food is equally cheap, and living is cheaper in Kieff than in any other town of the same size or importance. Nowhere in the world can you get a better steak than at Kieff, and nowhere else is it better cooked, not even in Britain. English people should not time their visits for July and August, for at that time of the year the heat is intense, and deadly mosquitoes rising from the surface of the Dnieper cause terrible havoc among sweet-blooded foreigners. In the autumn the almost cloudless sky is a glorious blue for weeks together, and the air has an exhilarating crispness in it, which makes walking and driving delightful. Snow does not make its appearance till the middle or end of November. Let me close this chapter with one more piece of advice to intending travellers. Have all your correspondence directed to the care of the British Consul, or it may never reach you at all. This is a peculiarity of Kieff.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CAUCASUS.

As large as France—Caucasian mountains—Highest peaks—Glaciers—Beautiful scenery—Conquest by Russia—Shamil—Anecdote—Count Woronzoff—Population of the Caucasus—Petrovsk—Bathing—Derbent—Labelled "Bordeaux"—Old bastions—Persian carpets—Baku—Native town—Naphtha—Wind in Baku—Antiquities—Nobels' factory—The Balakhany plain—Speculators in oil—Borjom—Mineral waters of Borjom—Batoum—Harbour—Description of the town—Compared with Yalta—Future of Batoum—Tiflis—Public buildings—Paintings—A temple of glory—Silkworms—Zionsky cathedral—Church of St. David—Gardens—Poushkin—Crossing the Caucasus—History of the Darial Pass—An ancient burial ground—A legend—Story told of Poushkin—Ananour—Descended from the Crusaders—A beautiful valley—Lermontoff's opera *The Demon*—The highest post-station—Above the clouds—A legend of the mountains—Legend of the chaos of stones—The Darial Pass—Vladikafkas—Mineral Waters—Kieslovodsk—Piatigorsk—Lermontoff—Palatial hotels—Climate.

THE stretch of territory known as the Caucasus* is as large as France. A mountain chain bearing the same name runs from the north-east to the south-east for a distance of some twelve thousand versts, and divides the Caucasus into two distinct parts—bare steppe on the north, and mountainous country—Transcaucasia—on the south. The highest peak in the chain is Mount Elbruz, whose cone-shaped head is crowned with eternal snows. The snow-line begins at the height of 11,200 feet, while the height of Mount Elbruz is 18,572 feet. The Greeks believed that it was from this mountain that Prometheus snatched the heavenly fire, for which sin Zeus commanded him to

* "Graucasus, 'white with snow,' was the name by which the Scythians knew the Caucasus, and may be regarded as the true original of that word." See Rawlinson, "Analysis of Scythian Words."

be chained to a rock while his body was devoured by vultures. Another giant of the Caucasus is Mount Kasbek, which rises to the height of 16,546 feet, and has many glaciers, eight of which are famed for their frequent avalanches. Until quite recently very little information has been available with regard to the glaciers of the Caucasus, but since 1901 a number of gentlemen belonging to the Russian Geographical Society have devoted themselves to the scientific investigation of this subject. They have not only succeeded in clearing up many uncertainties about the known glaciers, but have also discovered others, the existence of which had been till then unknown. One member of the society alone, who explored the Western Caucasus, has already discovered ninety..

On the borderland, between Russia, Turkey and Persia, rises Mount Ararat, with two cone-shaped peaks, which go by the name of Great Ararat and Little Ararat respectively. All these mountains, Elbruz, Kasbek and the two Ararats, are extinct volcanoes, and there are many signs that all is not yet quiet below them; such, for instance, as slight earthquakes, the bursting forth of fresh mineral springs and the throwing off of various gases.

The Caucasus is bounded on the east by the Caspian Sea, and on the west by the Black Sea. There are only five safe harbours on the Black Sea coast, the most important of which is Batoum. On the Caspian coast the only good harbour is that of Baku.

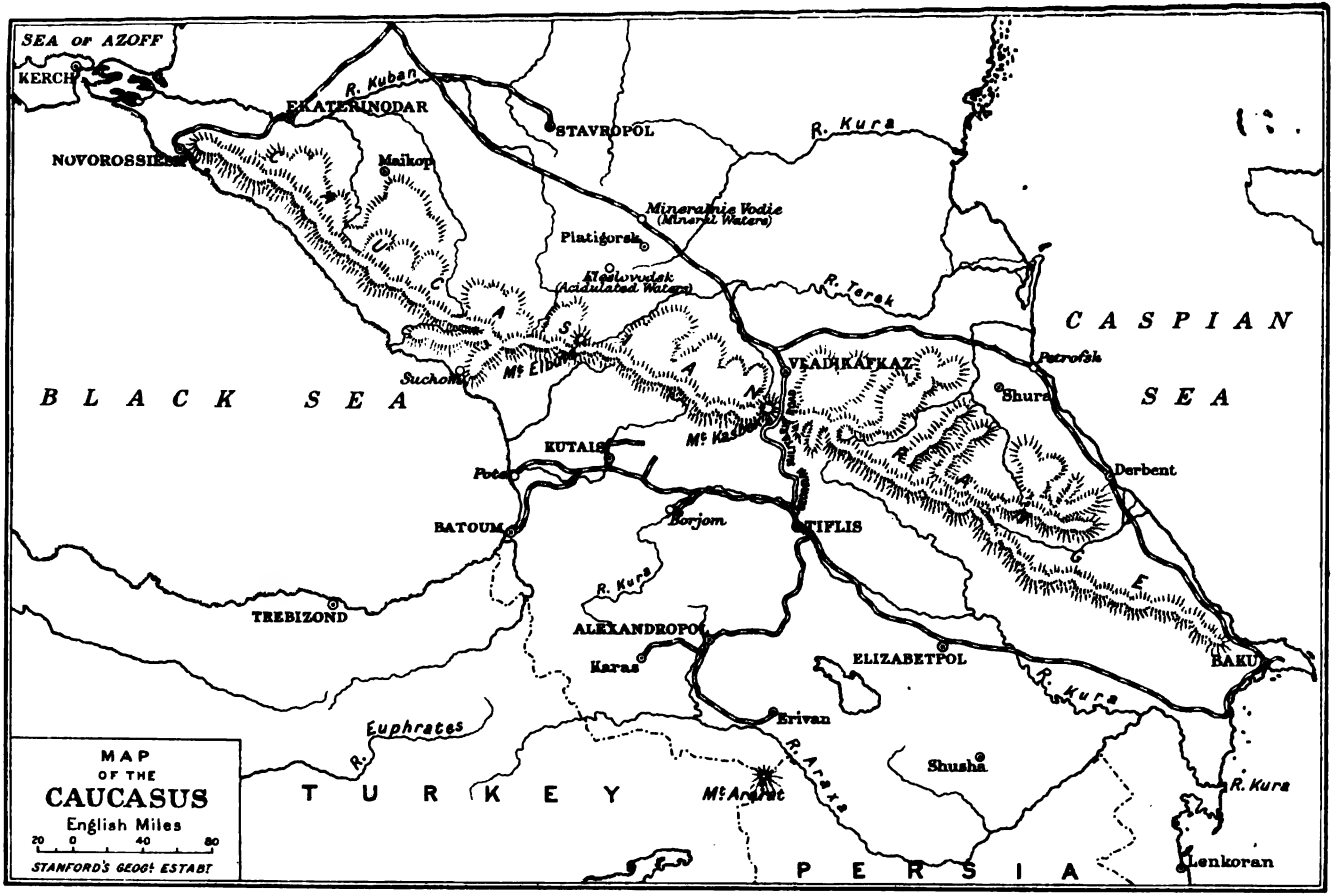
High up among the mountains there are many beautiful lakes, all full of fish, and receiving the water of many rivers. The largest river, the Kura, is a thousand versts in length.

"If you wish to see beautiful scenery you must come to the Caucasus," a Tiflis gentleman once remarked to me, and he added, "As for the Crimea, it is no more than a pretty garden." People who have seen both compare the mountain scenery of the Caucasus to that of the Himalayas; in truth it is grander than anything else in

Europe—and part of it is in Europe, though the southern portion is in Asia. I shall give my own impressions of the country when I describe the various places of interest through which we passed, but before travelling in a territory like the Caucasus one should have an idea, however faint, of the part it has played in history.

Many and fierce were the struggles that took place between Russia and the Caucasus before the two were united. Nestor tells us in his chronicle that Svatoslav, the son of Olga, was engaged in warfare against the wild tribes of Transcaucasia in the year 965. We also read that in 1319 Michael Yaroslavitch, of Tver, was harassed by the inroads of Usbek Khan, a Caucasian prince. In 1552 a large part of the Caucasus was subjected to Ivan the Terrible. Peter the Great determined to subdue the whole of this territory, and set out by way of Nijni Novgorod and Astrakhan for this purpose; he made a solemn entry into Derbent, but news that his presence was required in St. Petersburg led him to relinquish the leadership of the expedition he had planned and return to his capital. His soldiers proceeded, as he had ordered them, as far as Baku, which they took in 1723. In the reign of Catherine II. the Russians, under General Todleben, crossed the mountains and took Bagdad by storm during the autumn of 1770. Georgia was united to Russia during the reign of Alexander I. in 1801. From 1826 to 1828 Russia was at war with Persia; the leader of her army was Paskévitch, known after the capture of Erivan as "Erivansky Paskévitch." In the Turkish war, which followed immediately upon the Persian war, Paskévitch won many laurels, leading his troops as far as Erzeroum. Russia's present Caucasian boundary was fixed at the close of the last Russo-Turkish war, in 1878.

The Russians are proud of their Caucasian victories, and, indeed, not a step of the ground was gained without terrible bloodshed, for the enemy was brave, desperate, and fanatical. More than one Russian have I met whose father was killed in the Caucasus. We have all heard of



London: Hurst & Blackett, Ltd.

Shamil, the son of Dengai Mohamet, who kept the Russians at bay for more than a quarter of a century.* Shamil was born in 1796. As a boy he was remarkable for his lively disposition, and for his inquisitive interest in all that was taking place around him. He developed at an early age a passion for gymnastic exercises, and became, through constant practice, a skilled gymnast. In the severest weather he hardened himself by going barefoot. As he grew up he showed remarkable ability in the management of others, and drew, as if by magic, the wildest tribesmen to his standard, settling their private quarrels, and uniting the tribes most inimical to one another into one resisting force. But for Shamil, the Russians would have found it a comparatively easy task to subdue one tribe after another while these were weakened by their own petty rivalries. Shamil introduced the rule among the tribesmen that every boy who was old enough should carry arms. Their guns they got from Turkey, their swords were made on the spot by their own people. At one time their brave leader succeeded in gathering round him sixty thousand men. He was in the habit of decorating those of his soldiers who distinguished themselves by their bravery with silver medals, orders and stars, which he had caused to be prepared at the cost of the Caucasian government, such as it was. He insisted on his men living a simple and abstemious life; they were strictly forbidden to sing, dance, smoke, or drink alcoholic liquors. The Russians say that in whole-heartedness and freedom from personal ambition no one could surpass their brave enemy Shamil, and that his every act was performed with the sincere desire to help his country. When a man's enemies say that about him it is praise indeed. Here is a true story about Shamil which is told by the Russians: In 1843 one of the tribes, tired of their everlasting warfare with Russia, sent a deputation to Shamil saying that unless he would send them help they must give in. The envoys, fearing

* See "Kafkaz." Edited by M. G. Moskvitch, 1904. A valuable work, to which I am greatly indebted.

the wrath of Shamil, sought the ear of the hero's mother, and persuaded her to be the bearer of their message. Shamil heard in silence what his mother had to say and then replied that he would pray for guidance before giving his answer to the envoys. He thereupon shut himself into the nearest mosque, and did not come out for three days and three nights. The inhabitants of the district, and the envoys, waited all that time at the doors of the mosque. At last Shamil reappeared, pale and exhausted from his long fast. The envoys prostrated themselves before him and awaited his answer. "I have prayed for three days and three nights," said Shamil in a low clear voice, "and the Prophet has given me his answer. It is that I am to command that a hundred strokes be given to the person from whom I first heard the suggestion of submitting to the Russians. Alas! Alas! that person was my own mother!" In spite of the veneration he felt for his aged mother, Shamil now ordered the strokes to be given to her in the presence of all the people. After the fifth stroke the poor old woman fainted away. Upon this, Shamil cried out that the rest of the strokes must fall upon his own back, and, baring his shoulders to receive them, he knelt weeping before his mother's prostrate form until the whole of the sentence had been executed. Then he rose to his feet, his back covered with blood, and, turning to the envoys, said: "Return to those who sent you and tell them what you have seen." From that moment the tribe in question fought more bravely than ever against the foe to whom they had been upon the point of surrendering, and never more were they heard to suggest a shameful peace. For many a long year the contest dragged on, and one general succeeded another in the leadership of the Russian troops. It was in the wars against Shamil that Count Michael Woronzoff gained his early laurels. Not till the year 1859 did Shamil cease to struggle. On August 25th, 1859, he was cut off from his followers by Prince Variatinsky, and forced to surrender. He was then sixty-three years of age. He and

his family were sent to St. Petersburg, where they were treated with the greatest respect and consideration; he and his sons took an oath of allegiance to Russia, and settled at Kaluga, in central Russia. After a time he got permission to remove to Mecca, and there ended his days. His sons remained in Russia, and became officers in the Czar's army.

The Caucasian war, however, did not end with the capture of Shamil, and the fighting continued at intervals till May, 1864, when at last the whole of the Caucasus was declared Russian territory.

The present population of the Caucasus consists of about ten million souls, and these belong mainly to two of the great branches of the human race—the Caucasian and the Mongolian. Were I to enumerate all the people dwelling in that territory to-day I should have to put down more than thirty names. Most of them, though they have become Russian subjects, have retained the national character, dress, manners and religion, and, between them all, more than a hundred different languages and dialects are daily in use. The ancient Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Jews, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Italians, and, finally, the Russians, found their way to the Caucasus, traded with the natives, founded colonies, and introduced their respective manners, religions and civilisation. The mixing together of races has resulted in many strange customs, singular usages and poetical legends, the origin of which it is impossible to trace with any certainty. Railways have come at last, and with them there has come the veneer of European civilisation; but the traveller has not to look very deeply to find that he is still in the very heart of the East.

The easiest and most direct route to the Caucasus from Western Europe is by way of Moscow. Since the beginning of the year 1901 express trains, with sleeping and dining cars, have been running from Moscow to Tiflis, covering the distance in about seventy-two hours. But in summer, when one has plenty of time on one's hands, it

is pleasant to go by way of the Volga. This was our route on the occasion of our first visit; we travelled later by the express. After a day at Astrakhan, we travelled by steamer to Petrovsk, the most northerly Caucasian port on the Caspian Sea, which received its name in honour of Peter the Great, who was there in 1722.

In Petrovsk droshkies are expensive and the roads are bad. A respectable hotel has arisen there since 1900; but before that date travellers found only the roughest accommodation. Since a railway between this town and Baku was opened, in 1899, its population has increased with astonishing rapidity; there are now nearly twenty thousand inhabitants. The people are either employed in fishing, or in connection with the naphtha works. There are no sights to see at Petrovsk, but there is a fine sandy beach and excellent sea-bathing. I found a row of bathing-boxes drawn up along the shore, and decided to take a dip, as it was a very hot day. On joining a number of ladies who were already in the water I was surprised to find that I was the only one who had taken the trouble to put on a bathing dress. The waves were boisterous, and we were all obliged to hold on to a long rope which extended some distance into the water, but no one liked to come near me till I had assured them that I was an English woman, and it was merely from force of habit that I had donned a bathing dress. After that they clustered round me and conversed freely. Our faces were turned landwards and we saw another lady come out of her cabin, and, sitting down upon the beach in full view of every passer-by, proceed to rub herself all over with sand before entering the water. Such are the ways of Petrovsk. In connection with the naphtha works there have recently been constructed here five enormous cistern-reservoirs which hold collectively a million puds of oil. There is little else to remark about Petrovsk at present, though, if it goes on growing as it has done during the last few years, it will soon be a place of considerable importance. The town is situated on the slope of a hill, with terraces over-

looking the sea, where it must be pleasant to stroll on summer evenings. But the most vivid of the impressions that I carried away with me on a scorching August day were those of dust and heat.

The next town of any size on the Caspian shore is Derbent. The name is a Persian one, and signifies "iron gateway." Its fifteen thousand inhabitants are mostly Persians. The town is in a sort of amphitheatre scooped by nature in the hill-side, and lies upon the ancient road by which Asiatics once emigrated into Europe. The remains of an ancient fortress are still visible on the summit of this hill; they are connected with a high and imposing wall which continues down to the water's edge.* During the construction of the railway part of these walls had to be removed. The narrow streets, the mosques and bazaars must, I think, bear a close resemblance to those of Persia, though I have never been in that country.† The harbour is too much exposed to northerly and south-westerly gales to be a safe harbour for ships, and the storms which rage there in autumn are much dreaded by sailors. The inhabitants occupy themselves principally with fruit and market-gardening. Almonds are successfully cultivated there as well as grapes and many other delicate fruits. Madder was much grown in former days, and sent to the fair at Nijni Novgorod. The wine, much of which is labelled "Bordeaux," is sold on the spot at twenty-five kopecks a bottle; Russians say that the apricots and pears of Derbent are particularly delicate in flavour, but, as they also give unstinted praise to the fruits of the Crimea, it is hardly safe to pin one's faith to the judgment. Derbent was once ruled by khans, and the old bastions built by them are still to be seen. The town dates from the sixth century, according to Russian historians; Noushirvan, the famous king of Persia, built it as a defence against the Khozars. We learn from Karamsin that during the Arab dominion Derbent was looked upon as one

* Alluded to by ancient writers as *Murus Durbandius.*

† See "Vers Ispahan," by Pierre Loti.

of the world's granaries. Wheat was brought into the town from all the neighbouring countries and stored in an immense stone building which had been erected for the purpose. The celebrated caliph, Aroun-al-Rashid, a contemporary of Charlemagne, visited Derbent after its decline, and tried to restore to it its ancient splendour, but without success. As I have said elsewhere, it was taken by Peter the Great when he started out in 1722 with the intention of subduing the Caucasus. He is reported to have uttered the following words upon that memorable occasion: "I have placed my foot upon the borders of the Caucasus, and gained a fortress on the Caspian." In 1725 it once more became Persian territory, but in 1794 Count Zuboff retook it for Russia, and its key was handed to him by an old man, the very same who, in his younger days, had handed it to Peter the Great. There is only one Orthodox church at Petrovsk, but there are two at Derbent, the newest of which was completed in 1900. Nearly half the town revenues go to the laudable object of educating the inhabitants, and there are quite a number of schools, considering the size of the place. There are extensive herring fisheries along the coast, and many other kinds of fish are caught here, a great deal of caviare is also prepared for European markets. There are public gardens with fine shady trees, where a band plays twice a week in summer. There is a sporting club, to which most of the gentlemen of Derbent belong; they get excellent hunting in the neighbouring hills, where wild boars are plentiful. The sea-bathing is said to be very good, but I did not try it. A great many valuable Persian carpets have been smuggled into Europe by way of Derbent, but the fact is not generally known; I gathered this information from a man who has been connected with the business.

Baku, the third and most important of the seaport towns on the Caspian, dates, like Derbent, from the sixth century. It was a purely Asiatic town until its fortune-

bringing oil wells began to be developed, and led to its connection with Europe and the Black Sea by means of the railway. Since that time Baku has become Europeanised with unexampled rapidity. In 1860 its population was only thirteen thousand, but when, on October 22nd, 1903, the results of that year's census were published, the fact was revealed that Baku could boast of more than two hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom by far the greater proportion were males. The native town is fascinating to lovers of the East, but ladies have never been able to wander there without a safe escort, for its Persians and Tatars are among the fiercest specimens of humanity that one could well meet with, and its Armenians are not to be trusted. The streets are narrow and dirty, and a stranger might easily get lost in them: the dark faces of the men one meets there have an habitually threatening look. The Russian town of Baku, on the other hand, with its fine wide streets, bridges, squares and handsome buildings, is quite European. Between my first and my second visits a fire destroyed the greater part of one of the better streets, and in place of the old buildings there quickly arose a street of tall business houses that would compare favourably with those of our larger European towns.

Owing to the enormous amount of naphtha produced and exported from Baku that town has been styled "the capital of the oil kingdom." Here are some of the latest figures: 494,328,000 puds of raw naphtha were exported in 1903. The previous year, 1902, was yet more productive; the figures were: 513,543,000 puds. The railway has so far been powerless to carry away the oil produced, the steamers also have been powerless, but now a wonderful triumph of engineering skill is being accomplished; an oil-duct is being built between Baku and Batoum which, when completed, will have cost the government fifteen million roubles. Persia does much trade with Baku, sends thither large quantities of cotton, rice, silk, wine and dried fruits, fish and walnuts, and receives in return sugar, iron and Russian manufactured goods.

The Persian word *badkube*, from which Baku has derived its name, means a "gust of wind," and for my own part I was never in a more windy place. When on one occasion we hesitated on account of the violence of the wind to embark for a voyage across the Caspian, the steamer agents, and everyone else to whom we mentioned the matter, assured us that it always blew like that at Baku, and that it was quite useless to wait for calmer weather.

In the eighth century Baku was in the hands of the Arabs. From the sixteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth it belonged more or less to Persia. The Russians stormed and took it in 1723, but it again became Persian in 1735. In 1796 it once more became Russian territory, but it was not till 1859 that it became a government of the Russian Empire.

The antiquities of Baku, which Russian travellers hasten to visit, consist of the ruins of the palace of the Shirvan Shahs, dating from the fifteenth century, with a court of justice; and a couple of mosques; the palace is built in the Arab style; one of the mosques is said to date from the year 1078. Close by is the Maiden's Tower, about which there is more than one weird legend; it now serves as a lighthouse.

Besides the native town and the Russian town, which are known by the respective names of "Old Baku" and "New Baku," there is a third part of Baku, which consists exclusively of oil-factories, and which rejoices in the sinister name of "Black Town." The air reeks with petroleum, and there is nothing on which to rest the eye but ugly machinery and huge vats filled with vaseline, benzine, or kerosene. Boats laden with oil ply all day between Black Town and Petrovsk, and trucks carry it into Baku by a side railway. A little beyond Black Town is Nobels' factory, where many persons go to see the wonderful machinery that works so noiselessly, and can be managed by so few men. Ten men are sufficient to work machinery which turns out 2,400 lbs. of kerosene

in a day. The Nobel brothers were originally Swedes, but they chose to become Russian subjects. Through their success in the sinking of oil wells they have become multi-millionaires.

We drove out one evening to the Tatar village on the Balakhany plain, about eight miles from Baku, and watched the wild Tatars cooking their supper by the flames of natural gas fires. The gas comes up through holes in the earth. It is a little beyond these fires that there still stands a Persian fire temple where the followers of Zoroaster performed their religious rites as recently as 1850. There are no fire-worshippers there now.*

About a mile from here gas comes up through the waters of the Caspian, and igniting in fine weather hisses away on the top of the water till it is extinguished by the wind. People go out in boats to view this interesting phenomenon.

The Apsheronsky peninsula and the islands near it are all oil land, and the amount of naphtha brought up by the wells of Baku, the peninsula, and the islands, in 1900, amounted to four hundred and fifty puds (eighteen thousand pounds). The inhabitants are all speculators in oil, and the locality swarms with oil-brokers who make it their business to advise intending investors where to try their luck. To sink an oil well is to play at a game of chance. Fortunes are lost and won at Baku as surely as they are at Monte Carlo. The price of land rises and falls with astonishing rapidity; instead of the fifty roubles formerly asked for three acres, five thousand roubles are now asked in localities where the wells already sunk have proved successful. The fame of fortunes made in this way has attracted many foreigners; English people have gone there in such numbers that an English church has had to be built for them. Many an English maiden lady with a little capital at her disposal has tried her luck with the Baku oil wells.

The Transcaucasian railway joins Baku with Batoum

* Zoroastrians do not *worship* fire, as some are inclined to think, they reverence it as a pure element.

and passes through Tiflis. At a distance of fourteen versts from Baku, at a little station called Balajare, it is joined by the line by which there are direct through carriages to St. Petersburg by way of Tiflis and Moscow. These carriages are sumptuously fitted up and are equal in elegance and comfort to the *trains de luxe* on the Siberian railway.

On leaving Baku for Borjom and Tiflis we took care to be at the station in good time, for we had been warned that the Tiflis train always started two or three minutes before the appointed hour. Borjom, "the pearl of the Caucasus," is situated a hundred and forty-nine versts from Tiflis and two hundred and forty-three versts from Batoum. It is reached by a little side line, and lies in a beautiful mountain valley, surrounded by pine trees and situated two thousand eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. Many sick people, and especially delicate and anæmic children, are sent there from all parts of Russia on account of the life-giving purity of its mountain air. The mildness of its climate in winter, and its bracing coolness in summer, make it a most suitable place for invalids undergoing the open-air cure. But it is for its mineral springs that Borjom is chiefly famous. It is the Russian Wiesbaden. Invalids suffering from all manner of complaints go to Borjom to drink the waters and to bathe in them. There is, besides these attractions, a milk farm, under medical supervision, where excellent milk can be obtained at a moderate price. The chief gathering-place of visitors is the "Mineral Waters Park," where a pretty *Kursaal* or pump-room has been built over one of the springs, and where there is a theatre and a music pavilion; the theatre is rarely used, however, and simplicity, both in pleasures and dress, are among the charms of Borjom. The finest building in the place is the palace of the Grand Duke Michael Nikolaiévitch, which stands in a lovely park of its own. Visitors may go over the palace when the family is absent.

The mineral waters of Borjom were discovered by a

Russian officer, General Popoff, who, having experienced the good effects of the waters in 1832, used to send the soldiers of his regiment to drink them when they were ailing. With the aid of machinery brought from Paris for the purpose, large quantities of salts and pastilles are manufactured annually, and ten thousand bottles of the water can be prepared for exportation in a single day. The number of bottles exported has increased of late with remarkable rapidity; in 1891 only one thousand and fifty-five bottles were exported, but in 1901 the number had risen to one million four hundred and forty.

Batoum, on the Black Sea coast, has the best harbour in Russia after that of Sebastopol; there is a project on foot for widening it after the pattern of the harbour at Antwerp, which is considered by experts to be the best in Europe. Besides this, its principal harbour, Batoum has a smaller one devoted exclusively to the naphtha trade; it is twenty-six feet in depth and protected by a mole. The approach from the sea is very picturesque. I have many a time heard Russians go into raptures over it. For my own part, the place is too closely connected with the export of petroleum to have any agreeable associations. There is no port on the face of this earth from which more naphtha is annually exported; but when the oil-duct between it and Baku is in full working order the amount exported will be much greater than it is at present. At present its shipping returns are a million puds in a year. More than five million roubles were expended by the government in the construction of the naphtha harbour. Batoum is, like Baku, a place better adapted for the making of fortunes than for the spending of them when made. The Russian was right who observed that "Batoum lives and breathes with the aid of petroleum." The town is not, however, without its good points; its interesting park, adorned with flowering mangolias and many tropical plants, its Nicholas Boulevard, running parallel with the sea-shore, its shady walks and green lawns are a delight to the eye in summer. A band plays on the Nicholas

Boulevard four afternoons in the week, and there are chairs for hire, just as there are in Hyde Park. In spite of the fact that Batoum gets more rain than any other town in the Caucasus, it is considered to be an exceptionally healthy place, and fevers are almost unknown. Scavengers parade the streets daily, and cart all the rubbish of the town and all street refuse into the sea before nightfall. As regards climate, Batoum is a little hotter than Nice in summer, and a little colder in winter, but it is quite free from those cold and piercing winds that often make a winter sojourn in the French Riviera a doubtful pleasure. The shores of Batoum are as verdant with foliage in the depth of winter as they are in June and July. Camellias and Australian acacias flourish there when the shores of Yalta and Aloupka are partially despoiled by the winter blasts of their accustomed beauty. For those who do not object to the odour of petroleum, Batoum is a health-resort not to be despised.

In August, 1903, Batoum celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence as a Russian town. In that space of time its population had risen from three thousand to thirty thousand. Under its original name of Bate it was known to the traders of ancient Greece and to the merchants of Asia Minor. The Georgians built a town on the spot it now occupies in the eleventh century, and in 1547 the Turks had a garrison there. The Turks destroyed all its Christian monuments and forced its people to embrace the Mohammedan faith. At present no one should go to Batoum who is averse to "roughing it," but it is easy to predict that in a few years time its environs will be provided with comfortable hotels and elegant hydropathic establishments, so situated as to receive all the benefits of sea and mountain air, and escape the naphtha.

Tiflis, once the capital of Georgia, and now the chief town in the government of that name in the Russian Empire, lies in a mountain hollow, one thousand three hundred feet above the level of the sea. The river Kura cuts the town into two parts, and is crossed by seven bridges.

Cossacks.

[*To face page* 423.

Mountain scenery meets the eye on all sides, and one is reminded somewhat of Innsbruck, both by the situation of the place and by the character of a large part of its inhabitants; like Innsbruck, Tiflis has its streets gay during the season with military uniforms and gaily-dressed ladies. The Governor is always a military man, and there are many troops stationed there. Most of the Russian residents, if they are not military, are in government employ, and wear uniforms of one kind or another. The population in 1904 was reckoned at a hundred and eighty thousand souls, of whom twenty-five per cent. were Russians, thirty-eight per cent. Armenians, and twenty-six per cent. Georgians. The Armenians are occupied almost exclusively in trade and various handicrafts, and the same may be said of the Georgians, more or less, though a small proportion of these are military, and a still smaller proportion bureaucrats. There is no mistaking the Georgian soldier, however Russian his uniform; his large, shining black eyes, his swarthy complexion and his nobly-moulded features are unique. It is thanks to the industry of the Armenians* that the trade revenues of Tiflis have risen to fifty million roubles a year. European shops, tramways, and electric light in some of the streets, make the traveller feel at times that he is in Europe, but the impression does not last long, for Asia still predominates, and is met with at every turn. Strange costumes, narrow Eastern streets lined with Armenian booths, unpaved thoroughfares deep in mud, and many other sights, bring the mind back to reality. On windy days the dust blows through the streets in clouds and columns, for only a few can be watered on account of the inadequacy of the water supply, which has been known to fail entirely in very hot weather for days at a time.

The Governor-General lives in a luxurious palace containing seventy rooms, many of which are truly palatial both as to size and furniture, and a private chapel; his position and the pomp of his surroundings might be com-

* There is a saying that it takes ten Jews to cheat an Armenian.

pared to those of our Indian Viceroys. Opposite the palace is the public library, free to all throughout the year, with the exception of feast days; it contains more than thirty thousand volumes. A monument in memory of Prince Michael Woronzoff, raised by the people of Tiflis and unveiled in 1867, stands on the Nicholas bridge; it is a bronze figure of Woronzoff, standing with bare head, in the uniform of a field-marshal, with a Caucasian fur cap in his hand.* In the same year there was opened a natural history museum, which contains fine collections of geological and zoological specimens; there are also departments devoted to ethnographical, botanical, entomological and archæological specimens; in its gardens there stands a bust of the archæologist Berjé, put up in 1886; among the natural history museums of Russia, this one takes the first place after those of St. Petersburg and Moscow. It is open to the public on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, when twenty kopecks (2½d.) is charged for admission. A complete catalogue (6d.) is for sale at the entrance. The vestibule is ornamented with pictures from the brush of the artist Zama, all having Caucasian legends for their subject; one of them is Prometheus chained to the rock; another represents the arrival of the Argonauts at Colchis; the head of Jason in this picture is a portrait of the Grand Duke Michael M. Nikolaiévitch. Jason is standing at the prow of his ship, the *Argo*, and pointing with his hand towards the foggy distance. Medea is seen walking with her father and sister upon the shore, her face is a portrait of a Georgian princess; the shore of Colchis is shrouded in mist and the sky is dark and lowering, but the sea behind the *Argo* is serene and blue, and lit by bright sunshine. The next picture represents

* "Woronzoff commanded a division of grenadiers at Borodino, where he was severely wounded, and had the whole of his division cut to pieces. He commanded the Russian Chasseurs, in support of the Swedish battalion at Leipzig, and offered so obstinate a resistance to Napoleon himself in the campaign of 1814, as to elicit from the emperor the flattering observation, "Voilà le bois dont on fait des maréchaux." See Commander J. B. Telfer, "Crimea and Transcaucasia." See also Chapter XXIV. of this volume.

Jason and Medea prostrating themselves before the statue of Hecate. Just beyond is a large fresco on which Noah is depicted as an aged man planting vine shoots which he has just cut from a leafy vine, while in the distance is seen the misty top of Ararat. The second room is devoted to Caucasian minerals; and the third to the ornithology of the Caucasus, this contains a fine collection of stuffed birds with their respective eggs. In an adjoining room is a collection of bones and skeletons, amongst which are the bones of a mammoth discovered on a sandbank near Batoum in 1880. This museum owes its existence to the labours of Radde, one of Russia's greatest geologists, who, besides being its founder, was its energetic director for more than thirty years.

Another museum in Tiflis which is perhaps better known, and certainly more popular with Russian tourists, is the Museum of Military History. Russians have called it a "temple of glory." It is filled with pictures and trophies relating to "the hundred years' war" waged between Russia and the peoples of the Caucasus, and the wars which preceded it. The building is a spacious one, well lighted by means of a glass roof. The façade is covered with inscriptions in gold letters, referring to the principal events of these wars, the earliest date being 1567, and the most recent 1885. As regards the paintings which adorn the walls of the various rooms, they may be of special interest to military men, but to the ordinary tourist they are a wearisome collection of war scenes, chiefly representing Russian cavalry galloping headlong into the midst of mounted Georgians brandishing scimitars. The turbans of the enemy, as well as their weapons, are a constant reminder that the struggle lay between Europe and Asia, between the civilised and the uncivilised world. It was a war in which Russia was bound to be the final victor. But it is easy to be wise after the event.

There is also a museum in connection with the silk industry and the cultivation of silkworms, where visitors can see the working of every process in connection with

the production and manufacture of silk—from the hatching of the silkworms' eggs to the weaving of the silk; there is, among other departments, a laboratory for research in connection with the diseases of silkworms.

In the Zionsky cathedral, in the Asiatic quarter, there is preserved a wonderful relic—the cross of St. Nina, who introduced Christianity into Georgia. It is said to have come into the possession of the Armenians in 458, since which time its chequered history has been carefully recorded down to the present day, and would fill pages were I to attempt to condense and reproduce it in the present volume. Another ancient church which is visited by every conscientious tourist is that of St. David, which, however, is much more difficult of access, for it stands on the side of a steep hill, and to visit it necessitates a good climb, which is pleasanter in winter than in summer. Georgian women make pilgrimages thither to pray for children, and girls go to pray for husbands, and there is one particular day in the year—the first Sunday after the Ascension—on which the route is crowded with female pilgrims. The legend of St. David, which explains this custom, has been told by previous travellers, so I need not repeat it here.

Tiflis is rich in beautiful gardens, both public and private, amongst which may be mentioned the fine botanical gardens, which have a school of gardening, a laboratory, a reading-room, and a botanical library. One large division of the gardens is devoted to the rearing of various kinds of fruit trees from the seed, and in 1903 alone it supplied the country round with twenty thousand seedlings of the best kinds.

Poushkin is remembered here, as in almost every town in Russia; one of the principal squares has, since the fifteenth anniversary of the poet's death, in 1887, borne the name of Poushkin Square; in its centre stands the poet's bust.

It was when Count Michael Woronzoff became Governor-General of the Caucasus, in 1844, that the European town of Tiflis first came into existence. It was Woronzoff who

built the first Russian theatre, started the first newspaper, and opened colleges for boys and girls respectively; he also founded the public library and the geographical society. Tiflis, an insignificant Georgian town at the beginning of the nineteenth century—a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, most of whom lived in mud huts—is now a handsome Russian centre—the capital of the Caucasus, a territory with ten million inhabitants.

When we had explored the Asiatic part of Tiflis, strolled in the Armenian bazaar, and visited the Armenian churches, we took outside seats on the post conveyance for that interesting journey across the Caucasian mountains by which most European travellers approach Tiflis, but by which we were leaving it—the Georgian military road, which cuts through the Caucasian range from north to south and joins the Northern Caucasus to Transcaucasia. The drive takes two whole days, and the intervening night is spent at a roadside inn high in the mountains. The road passes over mountain torrents, between jagged cliffs, round high peaks, and over the famous Darial Pass. The Georgian chronicles are full of tales about this passage through the mountains, and about the nomadic tribes of Transcaucasia who came over it to invade their peaceful towns; they tell how the Georgian princes had constantly to send their most trusty warriors to defend the pass. The first time this pass is mentioned by the Caucasian chroniclers is in the second century of the Christian era. In olden days the journey was a difficult one, as there was no proper road, and travellers were constantly plundered by wild mountain tribes. It was in 1769 that it became, for the first time, of importance to Russia; it was then that the Russian troops under General Todleben were ordered to cross the Caucasus and render assistance to the Georgian prince, Heraclius, against the Turks. A strong escort was at that time indispensable even for a body of soldiers. In 1770 a contingent of Russian soldiers was attacked and forced to flee for their lives, leaving their weapons and baggage in the hands of the bandits. Towards the close

of the eighteenth century a Russian, who acted as a spy and secret agent for Prince Potëmkin, reported that the pass was very dangerous, and even fatal to travellers, especially during the winter months, and that it was strewn with tattered clothes and horses' skeletons. In those days there was no bridge over the river Terek, and merchants with their packs had to pay extortionate prices to the wild men who aided them to cross; then, too, though it was easy enough to hire animals at Tiflis for the first stage of the journey, it was often very difficult to get relays. At one part of the road for a distance of thirty versts natives had to carry the packs. The merchandise was done up into bales, each weighing from two hundred to two hundred and forty pounds; and it took three men to carry one bale; they each took the load in turn, and all three lent a hand at dangerous places. The natural danger of the route and the difficulties that had to be overcome were very great; wide crevasses had to be stepped over and corners to be passed, where a moment's giddiness would have resulted in a terrible fall and certain death.

Georgia* came under the protection of Russia in 1783, and in 1784 the Russians built their first fortress along this route, but the mountaineers practically held the pass till 1801, when Georgia was united to Russia. Then it was that the question of making a safe road across the Caucasus was seriously discussed, but as long as the route was

* "Iberia, the Georgia of our day, has been celebrated from time immemorial for the warlike spirit of its inhabitants, who battled with equal success against the arms of Persia and the Macedonian kings . . . . Conquered by Pompey, she figures constantly after that date in Roman history, which speaks of several of her kings as being tributary to Rome. One of them, Pharasmane II., was a faithful friend of the emperor Hadrian, and was accorded the honour and privilege of sacrificing to the gods in the Capitol. But all historical reference to this interesting people ceases with the division of the empire. We only know that Christianity was introduced during the reign of Constantine the Great, and that the hold it took upon the people was a result of the efforts of St. Simon Stylites. After having been conquered by the Moguls, Georgia was subjected to Persia in 1476." See Karamsin. This historian also tells us that a Russian prince, George, who was the son of Andrew Bogolubsky, played a great part in Georgian history. He married Queen Tamar, who ascended the Georgian throne in 1171.

infested by mountaineers nothing could be done. To clear the road of these the Government erected redoubts at short distances, from Tiflis to Vladikafkaz. Forty-one thousand roubles were allotted to the building of the road and thirty thousand to the construction of bridges. In 1809 two bridges were built, under the supervision of General Tomasoff, one at the Darial Pass and one near Vladikafkaz, both at points where fallen rocks obstructed the way. In 1814 the construction of the road was so far advanced that it was possible to accomplish the journey in a wheeled vehicle, and the Georgian military road became what it is at the present day, one of the grandest carriage roads in the whole world.

The Georgian military road is divided into twelve stages, beginning at Tiflis, in Asia, and ending at Vladikafkaz, in Europe. It is two hundred versts in length.

After leaving Tiflis the first few versts are not of any particular interest; then a tall iron cross comes in view; this was erected in 1837, to mark the spot where the horses of Nicholas I. took fright, and where he was thrown out of his carriage and narrowly escaped death. For the next eight versts the road lies through the valley of the river Kura, with wide stretches of pasture land on either side. Upon one of these slopes there is an ancient burial ground, discovered as recently as 1871 by workmen repairing the military road; it contains tombs of two types—stone chests formed of large slabs of stone—and others on a lower level, well-shaped. In the lower tombs there have been found many objects indicating that the people buried there belonged to the iron age, ten or eleven hundred years before the Christian era. The upper tombs, however, belong without doubt to the Christian era, for they have been found to contain Roman coins bearing the impression of Augustus. The skulls found in the more ancient tombs are dolichocephalic, and quite different in all their measurements from the skulls of the Georgian race of to-day, and indeed from the races dwelling in the Caucasus at the present time, for all these are more or less brachycephalic.

The objects found in this burial ground are all in the Caucasian museum at Tiflis, about which I have already spoken.

Close to the first post-station lies the insignificant Georgian village of Mtzchet (1,535 feet). In the fifth century Mtzchet was a residential town of the Georgian rulers, till 469, when the reigning prince moved the seat of government to Tiflis. In the Centre of what is now only a miserable village there rises a large church, dating from the fifteenth century; tradition tells us that once upon a time a rich Jew of Mtzchet, named Eleazer, brought from Golgotha the tunic of Our Lord, and that his daughter, running out to welcome his return, caught hold of the packet and immediately fell dead on the spot. As no one was willing to remove the packet from her hand, which continued to grasp it, the tunic and the girl had to be buried together. Above the spot where the body was interred there arose a beautiful cedar tree, from the bark of which there trickled myrrh. In 318 the prince Miriam, who had been converted to Christianity by St. Nina, built a wooden church where the tree had stood, and this was replaced in 1413 by the present one of stone. Many of the Georgian princes are buried there. The tunic of Our Lord, which was once preserved in this church, is now among the relics of the Uspensky cathedral at Moscow. Freewill offerings from congregations in every part of Russia have kept the Mtzchetsky cathedral in repair from the time when the Caucasus came under Russian rule. Besides the church there are some ancient monasteries and a convent for women dating from the fourth century which the Russians began to repair in 1903.

The second post-station is that of Tsēlkana, (1,831 feet) among vineyards and fruit gardens with mountains rising higher and higher in the distance and a little lake a few versts off, the waters of which are impregnated with magnesia, and full of leeches to boot. The third station, Duschet, (2,915 feet) is half a verst from the town of that name, which has about two thousand inhabitants,—to show the simplicity and ignorance of whom Russians tell

the following story:—Poushkin, the poet, was once approaching Duschet in the company of a count of the same name. Poushkin quarrelled with the count over some trifling matter as they sat side by side in the carriage, and at last, his temper having got the better of him, jumped out and walked into the little town on foot, carrying his own portmanteau. He arrived worn out with fatigue and quite unfit to battle with the dirt and squalor of the place. "Take me to the mayor of the town," he cried to the first man he met, thinking that he would be sure of a hospitable reception. The mayor, however, was not at home; a servant showed the poet into a room, where he threw himself at once upon the sofa and begged for some wine, which he drank greedily; he then fell into a sound sleep. The master of the house returning home shortly after learned from the domestic that a stranger was asleep upon his sofa. He hurried to the room, and waking Poushkin by his noisy entrance, roughly commanded him to give an account of himself. Poushkin explained matters as well as he could and begged pardon for his intrusion. "Out of my house!" roared the angry master. Then it occurred to the poet that if he were only to disclose his name all would be well. "I am Poushkin," he said calmly. But to his surprise this revelation had no effect. "Out of my house!" roared the master, more angry than ever. "Poushkin or no Poushkin, out of my house!" and the poet had nothing for it but to hire a vehicle and set out for Tiflis, without the rest he so much needed. On his arrival there he laughingly related the incident to an old schoolfellow who happened at that time to hold a high post under the governor-general. The inhospitable mayor of Duschet was sent for to Tiflis, and arrived, beside himself with terror; he fell at the poet's feet praying for mercy. Poushkin laughingly forgave him and thought no more of the incident. Ignorant, indeed, must the people be, and lamentably low in the social scale, who had not heard of Poushkin!

The next station, Ananour, (2,335 feet) is in the midst

of a poor village, built up round an old castle with bastions and dentated walls, within which are two very old churches. The mountains have been growing steadily grander and the air sharper, and a glass of hot tea is very desirable. As we enter the modest inn I hear a fellow-traveller asking in a loud voice for "Tea, very hot." The tea is brought, and as we sip it we note down the points of interest we have passed. We have seen buffaloes swimming across rivers, and eagles soaring into the sky at our approach; we have seen strange villages like honeycombs in the rocky mountain-sides, and fortresses planted upon jutting cliffs to guard the road; the wildness of the scenery, the grandeur of the mountains, the breadth of the green valleys below our path, which has grown more zigzag at every few steps—all have to be noted down. How can we ever hope to do them justice with the pen? In one of the valleys near the post-station there is a sedentary population of some thirty-five thousand souls, about whom we have heard many extraordinary facts. These people are supposed to be the descendants of certain of the Crusaders who remained there on their way home from the Holy Land. They call themselves Khevsurs, which appellation is thought to be a corruption of the word "crusader." They wear a white or coloured cross embroidered upon their clothes, and are always armed even in peace time; when they are at war they don an iron helmet, chain armour, and iron gauntlets. Broadswords have been found in their possession, on the handles of which are inscribed "Vivat Stephan Batori," "Genua," "Solengen"; and other words which recall the Middle Ages. The Khevsurs are a brave people, but they are very dirty in dress and home; they are exceptionally hospitable to strangers; an act of discourtesy to a visitor risks the life of the offender. Some of their social customs are very strange. For instance, at the birth of a child both mother and infant are isolated in a shed, or "sarai," on the outskirts of the village, and no one is allowed to touch them for three days and three nights; to avoid contamination the rela-

tives hand food in through a hole in the roof of the shed which has been made for the purpose. When the infant is two weeks old a priest kills a sheep and performs certain rites of purification on behalf of both mother and child. As the above custom is in force even in the depth of winter, when the ground is covered with snow, one must infer that the Khevsurs are a hardy race, whoever their progenitors may have been. We are told that the word "love" as we understand it is unknown to these people, but at the same time it is affirmed that from her marriage day to the day of her death a wife never hears a harsh word from her husband's lips.

The sixth post-station, Pasanaour, (3,621 feet) lies in the valley of the river Aragva, close to a pretty little Greek church surrounded by leafy trees, which was erected by the engineering department. A more beautiful valley than this could hardly be imagined—green pasture land slopes gently upwards on both sides of the river, and merges at length into forest-covered mountain-sides. Scattered about on the lower slopes are picturesque native huts and bits of ruined bastions. The balminess of the air is intoxicating.

The seventh post-station, Mleta, (4,961 feet) is also in the valley of the Aragva, but here the forest-covered peaks have become bare and razor-like at their summits, and the landscape is a degree wilder. Darkness is approaching and we are weary of our rapture. We pass a short night in this entrancing spot, and continue our journey, at sunrise. It was of this point in the Aragva valley that the Russian poet sang :—*

"By day and by night the Aragva,
Over her stones doth sing
And in her sapphire wavelets
Gleaming goldfish spring."

But let us return to the prose of life. My brother and I sleep at the best inn of which the military road can boast.

* Lermontoff, in his opera *Demon*.

We dine in a "handsome" restaurant, off trout from the Aragva. In the upper storey are bedrooms for the ordinary traveller, and also a suite of rooms reserved for royalty, and designated the "Imperial apartments." We are charged the equivalent of sixpence for a samovar and fourpence for a candle. As to choice of rooms, the ordinary tourist must take his chance, for no notice is taken of telegrams reserving them. I was obliged to extinguish my candle as soon as I had closed my door, for there were large holes in the rough boarding which separated my room from the public passage, which was noisy with people coming and going till long after midnight.

A glass of tea at sunrise and we are off again. How glorious is the early morning air among the mountains! The road is now one long series of zig-zags. Up and up we climb, with so many horses to pull our vehicle that I have forgotten their exact number. This is thought by some to be the grandest bit of the whole journey. Kasbek has come into view, and we see its tall snow-crowned cone, very pointed and steep, not gradually sloping like Fugiama. Giant glaciers hang upon the rocks, so near us that we feel we could touch them with the hand as we ascend the spiral road. Up, and up, and up, with steep wall-like precipices on one side of us, and sloping mountain-sides upon the other. And all the time we are only crawling round the brim of the basin in which the Aragva eternally foams. The grandeur of the picture defies description.

The eighth post-station, the highest, Goudaour, (7,957 feet) is reached at last. We are above the mists. The sun is close to us, the rain clouds are far below. We think of Lermontoff's :—

> "Over the crest of the Caucasus
> The exile sped."

Never shall I forget the panorama that opened itself before our eyes as we left Goudaour behind us—mountains whose tops were covered with snow, deep and gloomy ravines, jagged cliffs—a valley of mountains, a sea of rocks

and rents. A legend tells how the mighty range came into existence: Once upon a time, when the Caucasus consisted of a number of fruitful grass-covered hills and pleasant valleys covered with corn, there lived upon the highest of these verdant undulations a saintly hermit. The devil constantly came to tempt him, and tried his patience sorely. At last the good hermit prayed that God would relieve him of the devil once and for all. An answer came to him from heaven, and he knew what to do. He gathered a bunch of thorns, and next time Satan put his head in at the door of his cell, he deftly caught him on the nose with them. Satan howled with pain and fled over the hills with such precipitation that the end of his tail swept the earth, from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and with such violence that the whole country was broken up into mountains and boulders. It has remained in that chaotic state ever since.

Soon we come to a spot where a gigantic avalanche of stones has rolled down and choked part of the valley. Another legend accounts for the presence of these boulders and explains how they came to be torn from the steep mountain-sides: Long, very long ago, there dwelt in this neighbourhood, in a simple wooden hut, a poor but honest couple. God, who is always merciful to the poor when they are upright in heart, sent them at length a beautiful little daughter, to whom they gave the name of Nina, after the saint of that name who is so greatly revered in Georgia. A more lovely child was not to be seen in the whole country round. Every passer-by, every traveller who came that way, was held spell-bound by her beauty, and traders would set down their packs and look for some gift to please the fairy-like child. At last the sovereign spirit of the mountains came under this spell: in all his long, long existence he had never seen anything so beautiful. He soon felt for her all the passion of a youthful lover: he watched over her every footstep and guarded her from every danger. If the child wandered away from her parents' hut in quest of some rare mountain flower,

the spirit, whose name was Goud, would place the desired blossom within easy reach of her tiny hand, if not directly upon her path. None of the five sheep belonging to Nina's father ever came to any harm; other sheep sometimes fell over the steep precipices and were killed, but these five sheep escaped every danger. In one word, little Nina was like the queen of the mountains. But, when Nina had grown to womanhood, the spirit of the mountains found that he had a rival. A companion of Nina's childhood, the strong and handsome young Soseko, fell deeply in love with her, and his love was returned by the young girl, though almost unconsciously. The spirit of the mountains began to get terribly jealous of this young man. He took to following him about, caused unexpected and dangerous mists to obstruct his path when he went hunting in the forests, and tried in many ways to bring him to harm. But all was in vain. Winter came on, and the young people saw each other more and more frequently, and their mutual attachment grew apace. Goud saw all this and was mad with jealousy; his frenzy knew no bounds. One day when Nina and Soseko found themselves alone together in a mountain hut, and could not talk to one another enough—they had so much to say—Goud hurled down upon them a terrible quantity of snow. But the lovers, instead of being frightened, were delighted to see the white flakes fall so thick and fast around them, for there was now less likelihood of anyone coming to disturb them and they could be alone together a little longer. Collecting a few sticks they lit a fire and sat by it in perfect contentment. Several hours slipped away in this fashion. Their hearts were as full of love as ever, but now their stomachs began to feel empty. The only food they had with them, two little loaves and a bit of cheese, was soon gone. They came back to reality from sheer hunger, and felt it was time to return home; but they soon found that a thick bank of snow on every side was keeping them fast prisoners. The day waned, night came on, and at length another day dawned, but still they were prisoners.

All their pleasant conversation had long since come to an end. They were now mute with despair and hunger. The captives thought no longer of love, but of bread. A third day passed. They were famished with hunger, and there was still no hope of release. On the fourth day the pains of hunger were almost insupportable. Soseko's brain at last seemed affected. He began to fling himself about in the strangest manner. Suddenly he stopped, gave a wild glance at Nina, and then springing upon her, like a hungry wolf, plunged his teeth into her white neck. With a piercing shriek the young girl fell swooning upon the ground. At that moment shouts were distinctly audible in the near distance. Nina's cry was answered by the voices of her distracted parents, who had at length found their lost child. Nina and Soseko threw themselves into the arms of their friends, and rejoiced that they were saved. But the love for one another which had filled their hearts was now turned to deadly hate. The spirit of the mountains was delighted to see that he had gained his cruel end; he could not refrain from laughing out loud. So terrible was that cruel laugh, that a torrent of boulders, loosened from the mountain-side by the hideous noise, fell thundering into the valley below. They still lie just where they fell, and that part of the valley is choked to this very day with huge fragments of granite rock. It is called the "chaos of stones." Hence, too, the name of the post-station we have just passed—Goudaour.

We descend into the valley at a break-neck speed, whirling round corners in a way to make the bravest traveller shudder. I have never experienced anything like it before or since.

Kobē, the ninth post-station, (6,570 feet) is reached at length. It seems a miracle that no bones are broken. We have passed the boundary between Asia and Europe, and Asia is left behind. Between Kobē and the next station Kasbek, (5,681 feet) lies that wonderful bit of mountain road, the Darial Pass, which, cut in the rocky mountain-side, skirts the wide valley of the river

Terek. It is a gloomy and impressive bit of scenery. Bare black rocks hang out over us as we round a dizzy corner, and below, far down in the valley, the river Terek gurgles like a tiny stream. Others have already described this part of our journey. The Darial Pass and Mount Kasbek have had their meed of praise from the pen of more than one poet, and Russian writers have preserved for us many a legend about Mount Kasbek. It was near here, too, that Jason obtained the Golden Fleece.

Two more post-stations, Larse, (3,687 feet) and Balta, (2,754 feet) are reached in turn, and at last we drive up to the railway station at Vladikafkaz just as the shadows of evening are beginning to fall across our path. We have crossed the Caucasus.

From Vladikafkaz we made a little excursion into the region known as "Mineral Waters"—the region of hydropathic establishments and sulphur baths. Every year these places are becoming more luxurious; Russians of the better class already go to them in numbers for the summer months. Fifty-seven versts distance from the station called Mineral Waters, and reached by a branch line, is that of Kieslovodsk,* or "Acidulated Waters," one of the handsomest and most popular health-resorts in the whole of the Caucasus. The Vladikafkaz railway, by which all these places are reached, is provided with the most comfortable railway carriages for summer travelling that it has ever been my good fortune to meet with. The arm-chairs have open-work cane backs and seats, and the ventilation and cleanliness of the saloon carriages deserve the highest praise. You can jump in without a ticket, there is no fear of being arrested for the crime. The

* An English traveller, speaking of the Narsan spring at Kieslovodsk, says: "It is strongly impregnated with carbonic acid as well as iron. This last discharges 190,000 cubic feet of gas in twenty-four hours, and is often resorted to as a sort of tonic by people who have gone through the regular course of sulphurous or alkaline waters; it is quite cold, and the physical pleasure of a plunge into its glittering waters, filled with carbonic acid gas rising and breaking into bubbles, is one of the most intense that can be conceived. It is like bathing in iced champagne." See "Transcaucasian and Ararat," by James Bryce, 1876.

"conductor" brings tickets with him as he makes his round, and hands you one on your telling him the name of the station at which you intend to alight. In short, all that can be done is done for the comfort of the public. Of what railway line in England or Scotland can this be said?

To the north of "Mineral Waters," on the main line, is Piatigorsk, also among picturesque mountains, and surrounded on all sides by mineral springs of more or less note. The house in which the poet Lermontoff resided from the year 1837 to 1841 is distinguished by a tablet. There is a fine statue of Lermontoff in the large square, put up at the cost of fifty thousand roubles, in 1889: it is to the Russian what the monument of Burns at Edinburgh is to our northern neighbours. A grotto in the side of a neighbouring rock, which was a favourite retreat of the poet, is now closed by an iron gateway, and looked upon as a place too holy for the thoughtless to enter. Close to the pump-room is the Nikolaievsky Flower Garden, with a fine pavilion called the "Lermontoff Gallery," a kind of crystal palace, with a roof of coloured glass, and a handsome flight of steps, built of stones from the neighbouring mountains. The Piatigorsk Hydropathic Establishment, completed in 1900, is open all the year round and is one of the largest establishments of its kind in the Russian Empire. It is impossible for me here to give fuller particulars of the Caucasian health-resorts, but in order to show the rapidity with which they have, of late, gained favour with the Russian public I need only give a few of the statistics published in 1904. In 1899 eight thousand patients in all were registered as "taking the cure" at the various health-resorts on the European side of the Caucasian range; in 1902 twenty-five thousand patients were registered, and in 1903, forty thousand. Palatial hotels are rising at all the principal centres for the use of the wealthy; but comfort is also assured to visitors of moderate means, in clean and unpretentious hotels, boarding-houses, and apartments. The most expensive

month of the year is June, as that is the height of the fashionable season. The weather is never so hot here as on the other side of the mountains. The Caucasian range, dividing the Caucasus, as has been said, into two distinct parts, gives it at the same time two distinct climates. The climate of the northern part is much colder than that of the southern, and there is a corresponding difference in the flora. The northern steppes are covered with snow during the winter months, like those of Russia proper, and there is little to show the traveller he is in the Caucasus, till he sees the beautiful outline of the Caucasian peaks looming in the hazy distance—pearl-grey at first, but soon an exquisite blue, like that of the Venetian mountains, as we see them from Sermione—"O venusta Sirmio!"

INDEX.

"ABACUS" (counting machine), 228.
Academy of Science, opened by Catherine I., 8; projected by Peter the Great, 8
Agriculture, 192, 223, 236, 253.
"Agurtzia" (cucumber), 224.
Aiversofsky (sea painter), 325.
"Ak-Meshed" (or White Mosque), 267.
Alexander I., 6.
Alexander Nevsky Lavra, 7.
Alexander Stift, 33.
Alexandrovitch, Andrew, 227.
Alexis Michaelovitch (Czar), 102.
Algeria, 243.
Alma, 275.
Aloupka, 317; sanatorium at, 318; vineyards of, 314.
Aloushta, 312; attractions of, 335.
Alsace, 27.
Altai mountains, 120.
Amianthus, 120.
Amsterdam, 101.
Ananour, 431.
Anastasia (wife of Ivan the Terrible), 180.
Angora (river), 67.
Anne, Empress, 180.
Antonio, Petro (architect), 102.
Apple trees, 181, 253.
Apsheronsky Peninsula, 419.
Aragva (river), 433.
Archangel, 15, 31, 60, 205.
Archangel, government of, 58; number of lakes in the, 58.
Archangelsky Sobor, 103.
Archimandrites, 178, 179.
Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 108.
Arians, 166.
Aristoteli, Fioravanti (architect), 99.
Arndt (mystic), 161.
"Artels," 64.
Asbestos, 120.
Asgarad (ancient name for Azoff), 289.
Asiatic coins, 167.
Askhabad, 243.
Assumption, Church of the, 99.
Astrakhan, 22, 96.
Athens, 135.
Auerbach (author), 244.
Augsburg, declaration of, 31.

"BABAS," 166.
"Bahars" (statues), 109.
Baidar Gateway, 313.
Bakshisarai, 268; hotels at, 269.
Baku, 357, 409; history of, 418; oil wells of, 417.
Balaclava, 303; population of, 305; the Portus Symbolon of Strabo, 305; the Urbs Climatum of Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, 305.
Balaclava Bay, 309.
Ballets, 4.
Balta, 438.
Baryatinsky, Prince, 35, 36.
Batori, Stephen, 146, 154, 166.
Batoum, 409.
"Bauer," 25.
Bavaria, 27.
Bay of Kronstadt, 13.
Beard tax, 84.
Bears, 139, 193.
Beaulieu, Leroy, 61.
Bee cultivation, 24.
"Beks" or "Begs" (rulers), 231.
Bells, 90.
Bentzon, Madame, 246.
Berens, Prof., 213.
Berestoff, 387, 395.
Berg cotton factory, 71.
Berg, Pastor, 35.
Bergen, 128, 129.
Berlin, 5, 87.
Bëron, Pastor, 208.
Bessarabia, 362.
Bielezero, 115.
Bielozersk, 196.
Birch, 265.
Birds, 64.
Black Sea, 261.

Blagovestschensky Cathedral, 103.
Bobrikoff, M., 213.
Bogolubsky, Grand Prince Andrew, 226.
Bokhara, 96, 110.
Bolgars, 226.
Bordeaux, 68.
Boretsky, Isaac, 143.
Boretsky, Marfa, 143.
Boris Godonoff, 102.
Borjom, 420.
Borky, 266.
Bosphorus, 343.
Bossio, Paul di, 104.
Boyars, 86, 125, 199.
Brama, 97.
Brandt, Prof., 35.
Buddhism, 118.
Bulgaria, 156.
Byzantine architecture, 314.

Cambridge, Mrs. Ada, 33.
Caracci (artist), 9.
Carelioe, 58.
Carlsruhe, 35.
Carpathian mountains, 3
Caspian Sea, 216, 261.
Catacombs, 173, 178, 179, 184, 293.
Cathgart, Sir George, 275.
Cathedrals, 5; Archangelsky Sobor, 103; Kazan, 9; St. Isaac's, 5, 9; St. Peter and Paul, 151; St. Saviour, 108; St. Sophia, 137; Znamensky, 124.
Catherine II., 5, 8, 21; crown of, 6; founds the first German colony in, 21; palace of, 6.
Catholic church, 17.
Caucasus, 21, 23, 409–440; population of the, 413.
Central Russia, 7, 35; colonists of, 26.
Central Siberia, 7.
Chasubles, 179.
Cheliabinsk, 232.
"Chereveké" (red shoes), 262.
Chersonese (Korsŭn), 284; ancient history of the, 284; discoveries in the necropolis at, 297.
Chocolate factories, 73.
Chudoff, 140.
Churches, 5, 153, 174, 231; Assumption, 99, 239; Basil the Blessed, 106; Blagovestschensky, 103; Kisheneff, 36; Mokrinsky, 205; Nativity, 231; Nicola, 205; Novgorod, 8; Rojdestva Christoff, 199; St. Elias, 205; St. John the Baptist, 206; Transfiguration, 156, 231; Troitskaya, 110; Tver, 36, 82; Uspensky Sobor, 102; Voskresenia na Debrach, 215.
Cimiez, 337.
Clarke, Dr., 155.
Claude Lorraine (artist), 9.
Clement XII. (Pope), 163.
Cloth factories, 68.
Clover, 51.
Cockchafers, 29.
Cockroaches, 42.
Coins, 158, 159, 167, 292, 293, 294, 295.
Consistories, 31, 32; Esthonian, Livonian, and Courland, 31.
Constantinople, 99.
Convents, 92, 201.
Cook, Mr., 72.
Copenhagen, 87.
Corn, 176, 183, 249.
Cornelians, 120.
Cornelius (Abbot), 151.
Cotton factories, 71; chief centres for, 70, 71.
Courland, 19, 31.
Coxe (author), 82.
Crimea, 96, 239; the fruit gardea of Russia, 268.
Crimean Peninsula, 25.
Criu Metophon, 295.
Cuyp (artist), 9.
"Czar of Cannons," 104.
Czarevitch, 182.

Danube, 369.
Darial Pass, 311.
"Datchas" (villas), 10.
Davydoff, Madame, 86; lace collection of, 87.
De Custine (author), 11, 55, 57, 106.
Delta of the Neva, 10; islands in the, 10;
Demidoff, Paul, 205.
"Denga" (coin), 131.
Dengai Mohamet, 411.
Derbent, 228.
"Desatine" (measure), 27.
De Vogüé, 246.
Dii, 116.
Dijon, 206.
Dmitri, 143.
Dnieper (river), 85, 166, 288.
Dominichino (artist), 9.
Donetz (river), 166.
Donskoi, Dmetri, 227.
Dorpat, 130, 174; high school of 187; university of, 172.
Dostoievsky, 8, 255.

"Dratinie" (two-handled tubs), 199.
Drevlianes, 116.
Droshkies, 2, 10, 114, 132, 174, 176.
Duderhoff hills, 12.
Dudley, Lord, 52.
Duschet, 430.
Dvina (river), 85.

EKATERINA PAVLOVNA, 82.
Ekaterinburg, 233; agriculture at, 236; candle-making, 236; horse-breeding, 236.
Ekaterinoslav, 167.
Elbruz, Mount, 408.
Elizabeth Feodorovna, Grand Duchess, 103.
Engel, Prof. M. R., 288.
English colony at St. Petersburg, 15.
Erfurt, 223.
Est peasants, 51; folklore of the, 186.
Esthonia, 19, 51.
Esthonian Ests, 184.
Esthonians, 23.
"Evangelical Christians," 31.
Evangelical hospital, 33.
"Evangelical Lutherans' Relief Fund," 32.
Evangelical Poor House, 33.

FACTORIES, 66–73; chocolate, 70; cloth, 68; cotton, 71; linen, 68; tobacco, 70.
Falconet (French architect), 161.
Falzfein (sheep breeder), 259.
Fénélon (mystic), 161.
Feodor Ivanovitch, 102.
Feodorovitch, Michael, 228.
Fetichism, 118, 121.
Fichte, 258.
Finland, 24, 58.
Finns, 7, 58; anecdotes of the, 62; bathing, 60; character of the, 59; habits of the, 60; number of, in St. Petersburg, 58; occupation of the, 63.
Firs, 173.
Fisher, Madame, 105.
Fishing, 63.
Flax, 56, 176; chief centres for, 70.
Foundling Hospital of St. Petersburg, 9.
Frasini, Marco (architect), 99.
Frasini, Pietro, 227.
Freemasonry, 161, 162.
Freifeldt, Bishop Conrad, 31.
Friedenthal, 301.
Funeral customs in the Black-Earth region, 254.
Fur trade, 64.

"GAFFIES," 71.
Galoshes, 145.
Gardener and Popoff, Messrs., 171.
Gascoigne, Sir Charles, 166.
Gatchina (a "datcha" locality), 13; distance from St. Petersburg, 13; population of, 13.
Geneva, 73.
German traveller's opinion of Russian stoves, 2.
Germans, in Russia, 19, 20, 28, 34; bee cultivation by, 24; customs of, 26; four classes of (nobility, intellectuals, trades-people, and colonists), 19.
"Gesellen Herberg," 33.
Glaris, 135.
Glinka, 8.
Godonoff, Boris, 50.
Godonoff family, 214.
Gogol, 163.
"Golosniks" (or voice carriers), 124, 125.
Gorchakoff, General, 243.
Gostinoi Dvor, 6, 100.
Goudaour, 434.
Gourko, General, 95.
Gourzūf, 326.
"Gradēla" (a building with twig walls), 142.
Grand Duchy of Finland, 31.
Granovitaya Palata, 99.
Great Ararat, 409.
Great Russia, 37, 40; forest land in, 39; peasants of, 37–57.
Greek Church, 17.
"Grivna" (coin), 131, 158.
Guitton, Louis (author), 16.
Gulf of Finland, 5, 11, 13, 123.
Guthrie, Mathew, 28, 55.
Guthrie, Mrs., 6.
Guyon, Madame (mystic), 161.

HALLOWAY (architect), 102.
Hannibal (engineer), 169.
Hanseatic League, 16, 128, 165; freemasonry in the, 161.
Haxthausen (author), 17, 27, 29.
Heather, 175, 176.
Heinrich (a Lett priest), 187.
Helsingfors, 59.
Herberstein (author), 99.
Hermitage, the (palace of Catherine II.), 6; built, 8.
Herrnhuters (Hussites), 22.

Herzen (editor of the "Kolokol"), 162.
Heym, 4.
"Hill of Sorrow," 206.
Hirschman (oculist), 258.
Holy Trinity (monastery), 92.
Home for Incurables, 33.
Hotel Vetzel, 271.
Hunting, 64.
Hurst, Rev. Dr. Jacob, 186, 194.
Hussites, 22, 27.
Hutinsky Monastery, 133.

Igor, 116.
Ikonostas, 82.
Ikons, 6, 14, 40, 72, 92, 169, 200.
Ilarion (Greek bishop), 196.
Imperial Geographical Society, 38.
Imperial Institution of Archæology, 155.
Imperial Library, 6.
Imperial *Orangerie*, 6.
Ingria, 58.
Ingrians, 58.
Inkerman, 275.
Inkerman monastery, 270.
Interlaken, 140.
Ipatieff (chronicler), 87.
Ipatieff monastery, 214, 215.
Irkutsk, 67, 123.
"Isbas" (or wooden cottages), 38, 114, 132; chimneys of the, 38; gardens of the, 40; interiors of the, 39, 40; roofs of the, 39; stoves of the, 39; vapour baths in, 39.
Isborsk, 115, 175, 184.
Isborskaya, 188.
Ispahan, 96.
Istomena, Admiral, 279.
Isvoschiks, 2, 80, 114, 132, 177, 207
Ivan III., 55, 99, 136.
Ivan IV., 100, 131, 147.
Ivan Kalita (Czar), 103.
Ivangorod, 129.
Ivan the Terrible, 94.
Ivanoff (artist), 109.
Ivanovskoff, 35.

Jasper, 120.
Jeltonojsky, 385.
Jews, 33, 166, 267.
Johann, Father, 13, 14; anecdote concerning, 14.
John the Baptist, 6.

"Kalevala" (Finnish National Epic), 189.
Kaluga, 413.
Kaluga, government of, 223.
Kama (river), 119.
Kamische Bay, 310.
Kamschatka, 119.
Karaite Jews, 267.
Karamsin (historian), 7, 17, 94.
Kasbek, 437.
Kasbek, Mount, 409.
Kazan, 18, 77, 227, 231–233; cathedral of, 9; extent of, 231; factories at, 232; fires at, 232; Tatar buildings at, 232; Tatar population of, 232; university of, 232, 243.
Kazan, cathedral of, 9.
Kazan University, 243.
Kazanka (river), 231.
Keller, Countess, 36.
Kerch, 288, 338.
Kettle Island, 13.
Khan Bati, 98.
Kharkoff, 12, 24, 25, 35, 256; cathedral of, 9; fairs at, 257; population of, 256; rents high in, 257; university of, 257.
Kharkoff (government of), cultivation of, 265.
Kherson, 349.
Khevsurs, 432, 433.
"Kibitka," 238.
Kieff, 7, 9, 24, 51, 370–407; cathedral at, 380; botanical gardens of, 391; history of, 370–380; university of, 391.
Kieff Lavra, 7.
Kiemros, 225; boot-making industry at, 225.
Kii, 373.
Kirghiz steppe, 231; "Kirmas" (festivities), 189.
Kisheneff, 36, 362; Jews at, 364; sulphur springs at, 368.
Knights of the Livonian Order, 147.
Kobé, 437.
Kohl (author), 9, 16.
Kokand, 20, 21, 77.
"Kolokol," 162.
Kondakoff, M., 295.
Konstantinovitch, Dmetri, 230.
Kopeck (coin), 89, 95.
"Kopeika" (lance), 132.
Koran, 243, 334.
Korels, 58, 62.
Koriv, 373.
Korniloff, Admiral, 271, 279.
Kostroma, 70, 204, 213; celebrated for linen, 215; monasteries at, 214; plague at, 216; reservists at, 215; Volkoff born at, 213.

Kostroma, government of, 222.
Kostuschko, 292.
Kotlinoi Ostroff (or Kettle Island), 13.
Kotorosl (stream), 204, 205, 207.
Kotzbue, Count, 356.
Koumiss, 339.
Krestiatik (river), 394.
Kreuzberg, 5.
Kriloff (fable poet), 8.
Krivitches, 116.
Kronstadt, 2; chief station of the Baltic fleet, 13; custom house at, 13; dockyards of, 213; population of, 13; the water-gate of St. Petersburg, 13.
"Krujevo" (lace), 87.
Kuban (territory), 288.
Kura, 409, 422, 429.
Kursk, 247; climate of, 248; fruit-growing in, 249; Jews of, 248; the oldest town in Central Russia, 247; population of, 248.
Kursk, government of, 24, 35.
Kutchuk-Stamboul, 341.
"Kvas" (cider), 65, 263.

Lace-making, 225.
Ladoga, 7, 117.
Lake Baikal, 7.
Lake District, 58, 60.
Lake Ilmen, 115, 116, 120, 122; bronze implements found near, 119.
Lake Ladoga, 5.
Lake of Pskoff, 192.
Lake Sterg, 91.
Langeron, Count, 353.
Laplace, 258.
Laplanders, 58.
'Lapta" (or foot-gear), 222.
Larse, 438.
Lazareff, 279.
Leblond (French architect), 16.
Leo (philosopher), 116.
Leonto, 197.
Leonton (bishop), 197.
Lermontoff, 255.
Lessar, M., 110.
Letts, 172, 258.
Lime trees, 253.
Linen factories, 68.
Lithuanians, 7, 143.
Little Ararat, 409.
Little Russia, 37; sheep in, 260; peasants of, 264.
Livadia, 324, 326; two palaces at, 325.
Livonia, 19, 147.
Livonian knights, 7.
Livonians, 23, 129.
Lomonosoff (poet), 106, 107.
Loraine, 27.
Lovitz (astronomer), 22.
Lower Massandra, 326.
Lubeck, 117.
Lucerne, 27, 140.
Lutheran Church, 19, 30, 31; charitable organisations belonging to the, 32.
Lutherans, 35.
Lyceum of Jurisprudence, 20.

Magaratch, 329.
Maidens' Convent at Moscow, 227.
Maimax (river), 15.
Makarieff, 229; fair at, 229.
Makaroff, Admiral, 108.
Malakoff Kurgan, 280.
Mammals: bears, 64; deer, 64; elk, 64; wolves, 64; otters, 64; wild boars, 122.
Mammoths, 8, 122.
Manchuria, 103.
Manufactures, 222.
Marcello (Doge of Venice), 99.
Margarita, Dowager Queen, 87.
Marino, Castle of, 35.
Market gardening, 223.
Marriage customs, 193.
Melancthon, 31.
Melnikoff, 49.
Memnonites (sect), 31.
Menin (Russian hero), 110, 228.
Menshikoff, 162.
Merv, 20.
Mica, 120.
Michaeloff, 89.
Mirza of the Golden Horde, 228.
Mleta, 433.
Mohamet II., 99.
Mohrfeldt, Pastor, 35.
Molka, 30.
"Mokroe" (damp), 188.
Moltke, 55.
Monasteries: Hutinsky, 133; Inkerman, 270; Ipatieff, 214, 215; Kostroma, 214; Pechorsky, 151, 173, 184; Spaso-Merojsky, 153, 154.
Mongols, 118.
Monomachus, 168, 197.
Montferand (French architect), 16.
Montrèsor, Madame la Générale de, 250.
Mordvinoff, Admiral, 313.
Mordvins, 226.
Morocco, 49.
Morozoff factory, 70.

Moscow, 7, 19, 51, 63, 70, 88; bridges built at, 99; copper and silver money coined at, 131; church of the Assumption at, 99; English novels in demand at, 105; ethnographical museum at, 37; fires at, 100; French establish silk and cotton centres at, 16; Gate of the Redeemer at, 103; Imperial Theatre at, 107; Kremlin at, 100, 215, 227; Lutheran church in, 36; Nikitsky Street in, 106; opera house in, 107; Petrovka, the Regent Street of, 107; plague at, 100; population of, 101; public library at, 108; ravaged by Khan Devlet Gerai, 100; Rumianevsky museum at, 108; Tatar attack on, 102; Theatre Square in, 107; the city of merchants, 101; the largest town in Europe, 98; trade returns before the Russo-Japanese war, 101; University of, 106.
Moskva (river), 98.
"Moujiks," 38, 60, 251.
Mount Athos, 234; holy picture at, 234.
Mstislav the Brave, 124, 197.
Mtzchet, 430.
Mushrooms, 175.

NACHEMOFF, ADMIRAL, 279.
Nadela, M., 339.
Naples, 1, 68.
Narva, 129, 130.
Natalia (sister of Peter II.), 227.
National Gallery at St. Petersburg, 9; pictures by Rembrandt, Ostade, Wouvermann, Claude Lorraine, Caracci, Dominichino, Tintoretto, Rubens and Cuyp in, 9.
Needle pine, 175.
Nervi, 317.
Neusatz, 301.
Neva (river), 4, 10, 66; delta of the, 10; Peter the Great's statue on the banks of the, 4.
Nevsky, Alexander, 227.
Nevsky Prospect, 4, 66; length of, 4.
Nicholas (a hermit), 151; tomb of, 152.
Nicholas I., 5.
Nicholas II., 5, 259; signs manifesto at Peterhoff, 11.
Nickolaieff, 349.
Nicola Mokrinsky, 205.
Nijni Novgorod, 64, 136, 226–231; early history of factories and workshops in, 231; fair at, 64; flour mills of, 231; kremlin at, 230; plague at, 228; population of, 229.
Nikita, botanical gardens at, 326.
Nikitin, Athanasius, 96.
Nikitsky Street, 106.
Nikon, 206.
Norwegians, large families of the, 63.
Novgorod, 23, 39; Germans of, 24; museums of, 84.
Novgorod, government of, 7, 24, 35; corn in the, 56; flax in the, 56; forests of the 139.
Novgorod the Great, 113–139; compared with Nüremberg, 135; extent of, 138; fall of, 147; Hanseatic merchants at, 129, 130; massacre at, 133; monasteries and convents of, 132, 136; present state of, 138.
Novotorjokskaya, 74.
Nüremberg, 114.

OAKS, 181.
Obo, 32.
Odessa, 31, 317; history of, 355; Jews in, 349, 357; plague at, 351; population of, 349; trade of, 358.
Oettengen, Prof. A. von, 194.
Oka (river), 226, 229.
"Okoun" (a kind of perch), 63.
Old Ladoga, 115.
Oleanders, 275.
Oleg, 116, 196.
Olga, 153, 156.
Omsk, 232.
Operas, 4.
Oranienbaum (a "datcha" locality), 13.
Origen (bishop), 165.
Orloff diamond, 6; weight of the, 6.
Oskold, 116.
Ostade (artist), 9.
Osten-Saken, General, 356.
Ostromiroff Gospel, 6.
Otrotch monastery, 93.

PAGENSTECHER, PROF., 71.
Palæolithic implements, 167.
Pallas (naturalist), 328.
Pankovitza, 188.
Pantecapæum, 343.
Party, M. O., 155.
Pasanaour, 433.
Paskevitch, 410.

Paul I., 6.
Pavlovsk, Imperial castle of, 12; a summer resort, 12; park of, 13.
Peasants of Great Russia, 35-57; belief of the, in witchcraft, 48; "isbas" of the, 38; laziness of the, 53; manners and customs of the, 57; marriage customs of the, 47; musical instruments of the, 55; peculiarity of the women, 45.
"Pechera" (catacomb), 174.
Pechora, 174; Setukese Ests of, 184.
Pechorskaya, 188.
Pechorsky monastery, 151, 173, 184; maimed beggars at the, 179; number of monks in, 181.
Peredolsky, 118, 119, 120; collection of antiquities of, 121.
Perm, 233.
Peroun (god), 118.
Peter II., 103.
Peter the Great, 4; statue of, on bank of the Neva, 4; conquers Sweden, 7.
Peterhoff (the Russian Versailles), 11; description of, 11.
Petrovka, 107.
Petrovsk, 414.
"Pfeffer Kuchen" (German gingerbread), 23.
Phanagoria, 339.
Philaret, wooden palace of, 200.
Philip (metropolitan), 94.
Phrolovsky Gateway, 99.
Piatigorsk, 439.
Pingoud, Pastor, 31.
Pisa, 206.
Plehve, M., 213.
Pleskow (Pskoff), 156.
Plushkin, M., 144, 162; collection of curios and antiquities of, 157.
"Podgolovniks" (pillow money-chests), 83.
Pogankini Palace, 165.
Pojarsky (Russian hero), 110, 228.
Pokrovsky Fair, 257.
Pokrovsky, Prof., 155.
Poland, 31.
Polienoff (artist), 109.
Polista (river), 141.
Polotsk, 196.
Poltava (government of), cultivation of, 265.
"Polterabend," 48.
Polutchkin, 207, 209.
Popoff, General, 421.
Portnieky (architect), 106.
"Posadniks," 135, 143, 147.
"Post-troika" (a three-horsed carriage), 210.
Potëmkin, 16, 333.
Pottery, 224.
Poushkin (poet), 168; born at Moscow, 170; influenced by the works of Byron, Scott, and Shakespeare, 170.
Prague, 21.
Prejivalsky, 8.
"Pröptse" (members of the consistories), 32.
Pskoff, 63, 103, 145-172; antiquities at, 157; Archæological Society of, 155, 165; a three-walled city, 168; birthplace of Olga, 146; Byzantine fresco painting at, 146; cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul at, 151; commerce of, 147; kremlin at, 146; "London Hotel" at, 165; Plushkin's collection of curios and relics at, 157; surrender of, 149; tumuli and stone-built graves near, 153, 167; "Wallace Collection" at, 171.
Pskoff, government of, 7, 136; catacombs in the, 173; corn in the, 57; flax in the, 56, 175; old monasteries in the, 152.
"Pud" (equals 40 lbs.), 64.
Pugatcheff, 22; rebellion of, 22.

"Queen of Bells," 104.

"Rabchik," 64.
Railways, 12, 13, 110.
Raskolniks (sect), 22.
Rauch, Dr., 140.
Reapin (artist), 109.
Rebalskoi, 66.
Rebinsk, 91.
Reindeer, 193.
Rembrandt (artist), 9.
Reval, 129, 130.
Ribas, Vice-Admiral de, 350
Riga, 130.
Riga, government of, 176.
Rojdestva Christoff, 199.
Roman Catholics, 35.
Romanoff, House of, 103, 214.
Rome, 1.
Rosenthal, 301.
Rostoff-on-the-Don, 69.
Rostoff the Great, 196–203; convent at, 201; distance of, from Moscow, 196; introduction of Christianity into, 196; kremlin at, 197; "London Hotel" at

Rostoff the Great—*continued.*
201; one of the oldest towns in Russia, 196; Rojdestva Christoff church at, 199; Uspensky church at, 198.
Rousseau, advice of, 1.
Rubens (artist), 9.
Rubinstein, 8.
Rumantzefsky museum, 359.
Rumianevsky museum, 108.
Rurik, 115, 117, 176.
Rurik, House of, 103.
Russia: a flax-growing country, 56; bells of, 90; birds of, 64; cathedrals of, 5, 9, 103, 108, 124, 137, 151; churches of, 8, 36, 82, 99, 102, 106, 110; foreign colonists in, 23; Germans in, 19; hunting in, 64; Lutheran church in, 30–36; mammals of, 64, 139; patriarchate in, 102; population of, 51; rich in horses, 255; Roman Catholics in, 35; serfdom in, 50; trees of, 11, 12, 95, 96, 172, 181, 327, 329; warmth of public buildings in, 28.
Russian: droshkies, 2, 10, 174; humour, 6; knouts, 163; money, 131; musical instruments, 55; peasants, 168; serfs, 21; stoves, 2; tea-drinking habit of the, 55; theatres, 4, 107.
Russo-Japanese war, 19.
Rye, 51.

"Sacred Hill," 173.
St. Basil the Blessed (church), 106.
St. Christopher, 159.
St. Elias, Church of, 205.
St. George's monastery, 295.
St. Isaac's cathedral, 5, 9.
St. John the Baptist, Church of, 206, 345.
St. Petersburg, 1–18, 60, 63, 74; Academy of Science at, 8; ballet of, 4; built on flat ground, 5; chief industries in, 69, 70; climate of, 3; coloured enamel work of, 72; English colony in, 15; factories in, 66–73; fine bridges in, 10; first railway at, 12; Foundling Hospital of, 9; German element in, 17; in autumn, 3; in summer, 3; in winter, 3; Jews of, 33; Lutheran church in, 33, 36; late hours of the people of, 4; National Gallery at, 9; Nevsky Prospect, the chief street of, 4; no hills at, 5; number of Finns in, 58; operas of, 4; suburban peasants of, 67; the Alexander Nevsky in, 7; theatres of, 4; university of, 8; Winter Palace at, 5; wrought and chased silver work of, 72.
St. Saviour, cathedral of, 108.
St. Sophia (Novgorod), 8, 125, 137.
St. Troitza, church of, 82.
St. Vladimir, 285, 300.
"Saló" (bacon-fat salted), 263.
Saltworks at Vouchegda, 228.
Samara, 183, 186, 232.
Samara, government of, 27.
"Samovars," 41, 177.
Saphonoff, M. H. M., 154.
Saratoff, 22, 24, 27, 186.
Sarepta, 22, 25; mineral spring at, 23; noted for weaving industry, 22; population of, 23.
Sarts, 315.
Saxony, 27.
Scandinavian tombs, 125.
Schad, Prof., 258.
Schaffhausen, 27.
Schegoleff, General, 355.
Schipka Pass, 95.
Schlehek, 373.
Schlehekovitza, 373.
Sea of Azoff, 228.
Sebastopol, 35, 266; charms of, 278; statues in, 280; the Sinus Portuosus of Pomponius Mela, 295.
"Seeg" (lake trout), 63.
Semenoff, government of, 221.
Semenoff M. (author), 23.
Serfdom in Russia, 50.
Serfs, liberated, 50.
Sergie Radoniefsky, 110.
Setukese Ests, 184; bee-keeping industry of the, 192; character of the, 194; colonies of, 184; dress of the, 191; drinking propensities of the, 194; early marriages among the, 193; folk-lore of the, 190; habits of the, 188; have no written literature, 189; hunting pursuits of the, 192; "isbas" of the, 192; language and customs of the, 184; national festivities of the, 189; no schools among the, 189; occupation of the, 192; physical aspect of the country of the, 188; religion of the, 185, 189; songs of the, 193; stature of the, 189; want of tact of the, 194.
Seven-end crosses, 169.
Shamanism, 118.

Shamil, 411.
Siberia, 12, 67, 117.
Siberian flora, 8.
Simpheropol, 301, 326; fruit of, 268.
Sinaf, 115.
"Skoroe Novogorodskia" (laws written on skins), 123.
"Skuroe" (prepared skins), 123.
Skvoritz, 226.
Slavensk, 115.
Slavs, 58, 59, 114, 116, 261; ancient customs of the, 84; habit of burying wealth, 168; jewellery of the, 9; tombs of the, 83, 109.
Slobodskaya, 188, 195.
Smolensk, 92.
"Sokrovnik" (treasury), 6; Orloff diamond in the, 6.
Solonbal, 15.
"Soudak" (a kind of pike), 63.
Sousanin, Ivan, 216.
Sparta, 135.
Spaso-Merojsky monastery, 153, 154.
Spinoza, 240.
Spiridon, 228.
"Sprengel" (a pastor's circuit), 32.
Squirrels, 64.
Stanislaus Augustus, 388.
Staria Russa, 44, 129, 140–144; Christian church in, 143; large stove at the railway station at, 145; one of the oldest Russian towns, 140; sanatorium of, 140; salt works of, 141; water supply of, 141.
Staroi Dvor, 216.
Statistics, 23, 231.
Statue of Peter the Great, 4, 5.
Stein, Miss Julia, 170.
Stergensky cross, 91.
Stockholm, 59.
"Strogat" (to plane), 228.
Strogonoff, Count, 169, 228.
Stroken, M. (archæologist), 154.
Struve, Professor, 35.
Stundists (sect), 28.
Sudhoff, M., 56, 171, 172.
"Summer Colony," 76.
Suvaroff, Field-Marshal, 8, 159.
"Svach" (or match-maker), 46.
Svatoslav, 116.
Swabia, 27.
Sweden, 32.
Swedes, 7.
Swiss Lutherans, 17.
Switzerland, 14.
Synods, 32.

TAMBOFF, government of, 255; a great horse-breeding centre, 255.
Tamerlane, 9.
Tanneries, 225.
Tarakan, 99.
"Tarantass," 32.
Tashkent, 19, 77, 230.
Tatar Khan, 7.
Tatar women, 49.
Tatars, 7, 81, 204, 215.
Tchaikovsky, 8.
Tchoudes, 116.
Tchufut Kalé (stone village), 268.
Terek, 243.
Theatres, 4, 107, 209.
Theodore (Greek bishop), 196.
Theodosia, 338; picture gallery at, 340.
Theodosius (saint), 247.
Tiflis, 317, 423; museum at, 425.
Tintoretto (artist), 9.
Tiumen, 233.
Tobacco factories, 73.
Tobolsk, 77.
Tolstoi, Count Leo, 13, 70, 237; family of, 243; interview with, 241.
Tomasoff, General, 429.
Tombs, 9, 109.
Tomsk, 79, 174, 232.
Tooptalo (Archbishop of Rostoff), 207.
Topazes, 120.
Torjok, 74–80, 89; industry of the women of, 75; school of embroidery at, 75; slippers, 75; value of the work done by the women of, 77.
Toulouse, 68.
Town mission, 33.
Transcaspia, 163.
Transfiguration, Church of the, 156.
Traubenberg, Baroness de, 250.
Trautpfetter, Prof., 392.
Trebizond, 96.
Tretiakoff Gallery, 109.
Troitsko-Serge Lavra, 86.
Troitzka-Sergiefsky Lavra, 110.
Troitzka Lavra, 7.
Troitzkaya, 110.
Truvor, 115, 175, 184.
Tsaritzia, 22, 23.
Tsarskoi Selo, 12, 13; park and gardens of, 12; Nicholas II. prefers, 13.
Tsarsky Kurgan, 344.
Tsëlkana, 430.
Tula, 237, 247; gingerbread of, 238; manufactories of, 237; population of, 237; samovars of, 238; weapon foundry at, 238.

Tundras of Siberia, 230.
Turgenieff, N. (author), 17, 135, 161.
Turkoman women, 163.
Tuskora (river), 248.
Tver, 36, 51, 70, 72, 130; ancient musical instruments found at, 83; an important lace centre, 87; churches of, 82; dress of the people of, 85; "glorious historical past" of, 81; interesting relics in, 83; museum at, 85; old kremlin at, 90; pearls at, 85; population of, 81; taken by the Tatars, 81; the birthplace of Athanasius Nikitin, 96; tumuli at, 83.
Tver, government of, 81; twelve districts in the, 85.
Tvertza (river), 74.
Tycoon, 6.

Ufa, 117.
Ulman, Bishop, 32.
Ulu Machmet, 227, 231.
University of Dorpat, 172, 186.
University of Moscow, 106.
University of St. Petersburg, 8; rich library of, 8.
Unterwalden, 27, 135.
Upper Massandra, 327.
Urals, 31, 45, 53, 228, 233, 247.
"Urmelodien," 194.
Usbek Khan, 410.
Ushakoff, M., 167.
Uspensky Sobor (coronation church of the Czars), 102.

Valdai district, 62.
Valdai hills, 216.
Varangian race, 115–117.
Varlaam (saint), 133.
Varmy (architect), 106.
Vashny Volochek, 91.
Vasil Ivanovitch, Grand Prince, 99.
Vasnetzoff (artist), 109.
Vassili Ivanovitch (Czar), 148; speech of, at Pskoff, 149.
Veless (idol), 197.
Velikaya (river), 151.
Venice, 3.
Vereschagin (artist), 108, 109.
Verro-Ests, 184.
"Vetché" (National Assembly), 199.
"Větchun" (wand), 199.
Viasemsky, Prince, 326.
Village industries, 217.
Vladikafkaz, 429.
Vladimir, 124.
Vladimir, government of, 40, 70, 136.
Vladivostock, 19.
Volga (river), 22, 204, 205, 209; colonies on the, 27.
Volkhoff (river), 85, 115, 118, 120.
Volkoff, Theodore Gregorévitch, 207; born at Kostroma, 213; installed as first Court actor, 211.
Volosts, 188.
Voskresenia na Debrach (church), 215.
Vouchegda, salt works at, 228.
Vsevolod (saint), 152.

Wallace, Sir Donald Mackenzie, 206.
Warsaw, 16.
Weinberg, Prof., 167.
Westphalia, 27.
White Sea, 117.
Wild boars, 122.
Wild fowl, 193.
Winter Palace of Nichloas I., 5; destroyed by fire, 5.
Wolves, 193.
Woronzoff, Count Simon, 316, 354.
Woronzoff, Prince Michael, 316.
Woronzoffsky Park, 317.
Wouvermann (artist), 9.

Yakuts, 230.
Yalta, 268, 271, 306, 322; population of, 324.
Yaroslav, 20, 204; churches of, 205; Demidoff Lyceum of Jurisprudence at, 205; theatre at, 209; linen of, 212; tobacco manufactories at, 212; tumuli at, 212.
Yaroslav, Grand Prince, 7.
Yaroslav the Brave, 197.
Yaroslavitch, Michael, 81, 124.
Yasnaya Polyana, 239, 245.
Yenisei (river), 166.

Zemstvo (or Town Council), 75.
Zionsky Cathedral, 426.
Znamensky Cathedral, 124.
Zouboff, Count, 350.

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